

PRESBYTERY TO  
BE REVIEWED

VOLUNTARY  
CONTRIBUTIONS  
OUT  
STEWARDSHIP  
CONTRIBUTION  
IN

ABORIGINAL  
CONGRESS TO  
PRESS FOR MORE  
INPUT IN NSW/ACT

FINANCE,  
EVANGELISM SHIFT  
and more

# The Northern Light

SEPTEMBER 2017



**It's not every day that Russell Crowe walks into a Casino business.  
Here's proof he came into ours!!**

TCL ~ 'Toys Change Lives' were graced by the presence of the Australian actor shortly after the official opening of their store front . Russell wanted to show his support for the boys and the project.

Toys Change Lives, the initiative of Uniting chaplain to Acmena, the juvenile justice centre at Grafton, Pastor Peter Boughey, is changing lives by giving the guys who come out of the centre an opportunity to make something of themselves. Already seven of 12 boys have moved on to continuing employment or traineeships. Another two are studying specific courses towards employment.

Peter said our outcomes are achieved by developing a culture of respect and self responsibility for our participants  
 We work intensively with the boys to build confidence and self-esteem and use other service providers to deliver specialised services.  
 It is through a reconnection to culture and taking responsibility that enables the boys to change their lives.  
 Once they see the opportunity they rarely reoffend  
 This is how we achieve our omission of stopping the cycle of

## PRESBYTERY TO BE REVIEWED

The Presbytery is to undertake a review of itself to determine how best it can serve the congregations it is responsible for.

The decision to do this was made at a recent Pastoral Relations Meeting and adopted by the meeting of the Presbytery last month.

Chairman, Rev. Robert Griffith told Presbytery that the review will include a comprehensive analysis of our structure, leadership, staffing and operational efficiency at a Presbytery level.

“But that’s not all”, he said

“We will also undertake a full review of all the resources across our Presbytery, not just financial and property, but personnel, expertise, civic and government connections, community partnerships and anything and anyone the Lord may be able to use in the ‘re-birth’ and re-visioning of our Presbytery. We want to ensure we leave behind a strong legacy for the next generation.

Robert said it was a blessing to be a part of the Far North Coast Presbytery in these times.

“We have enjoyed 40 years of vibrant ministry and refining challenges.

We have been given a great legacy from those who went before us and we want to ensure that those who are yet to come will one day thank God for what we left them.”

A Presbytery Assessment & Review Team has been established to oversee and facilitate this extensive review.

That team consists of Maggie De Leeuw, Rev James Annesley and Rev. Robert Griffith but they may co-opt others along the way.

For such a review to be effective, a lot needs to happen.

First and foremost, we need to be praying and encouraging people in our congregations to be praying throughout this process.

Whilst we will be assessing our current operations and reviewing our outward structures and processes, at the heart of this review, our highest objective will be to hear the voice of God and discern the leading of His Spirit.

As the One Who knows the end from the beginning, only God can lead us through the right doors and inspire and empower the right decisions which will ensure a strong, effective Uniting Church in our region long after we have all gone.

To be effective and useful, this review will require the full cooperation and support of all our congregations. Rev Griffith called on all members of the Presbytery to work together as a united team to support this review and to be praying for God’s leading during what could be a real turning point for ministry on the Far North Coast Presbytery.

Our primary job as Presbytery is to support, encourage, equip and empower all of our congregations and ministries.

Robert said he was optimistic and excited about the road ahead.

“I believe it is a God initiated and God empowered journey.”



## WHO WANTS TO RUN UC TOURS??

**One of the most successful activities of the Far North Coast Presbytery is still in danger of folding.**

Chairman of UC Tours, Russell Playford has again reminded Presbytery of his intention to step down from the role. He also reminded us that UC Tours has had an upsurge in intreat in recent times and some of the tours are fully committed.

Plans are well ahead for tours in 2018 to Mamma Mia at the Lyric in Brisbane and a Murray River cruise in April, along with a Sunshine Coast tour in March

and the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers in September.

But Russell said, along with him, there are others who act as tour leaders who are also stepping down.

Unless people come forward UC Tours will fold.

Russell also noted the amount of \$15,000 which UC Tours gave to the Presbytery

## ELECTIONS

Rev Robert Griffith was reelected to the position of Presbytery Chair at the annual meeting in Alstonville last month. All others nominated for positions were also elected  
 Deputy Chair: Rev James Annesley  
 PRC/Standing Committee  
 Robert Griffith, James Annesley  
 Lyn Davies, Russell Palyford  
 Sue Duncan, Peter Overton  
 Michelle Griffith, Ron French  
 Ian Imrie. Finance, Oversight & Investment Team: Russell Playford, Greg Mashiah, Mary Birch, Peter Overton, Ian Imrie, Robert Griffith, Maxine Osgood.

The Chairman thanked those who had completed their tour of duty and had not sought reelection.

These included Barbara Whale, John Mace & Olwen King.

It was noted that there were no nominations for the position of treasurer but The Finance, Oversight and Investment Team operate as a treasurer with bookkeeper Maxine Osgood.



Discussions are continuing with the NSW/ACT Synod about their relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. The chair of the NSW Regional Council of UAICC, Dianne Torrens was present at the last meeting of the Presbytery and presented a report.

## STEWARDSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

The NSW/ACT Synod will reintroduce stewardship contributions from July 2018.

This follows the poor performance of its predecessor, "Living Is Giving", over the past few years.

Synod Acting General Secretary, Rev Jane Fry, told a meeting of Presbytery Chairs that the Living is Giving programme was receiving support from about two thirds of the congregations and the amount given was declining each year.

Rev Fry said the purpose of the Stewardship Contribution is to ensure adequate and sustainable support for the work and witness of the Church as a whole.

"To fulfil the Uniting Church's call to be 'a fellowship of reconciliation' in the world, everyone needs to contribute."

All congregations will be asked to pay the contribution to the Synod's broader operations, activities and mission, based on their capacity to contribute, which will be determined by the Presbyteries.

## SUPPORT FOR MISSION STRATEGY FUND

On another financial issue, member of the Finance, Oversight and Investment Team, Greg Masish, urged congregations to give to the Presbytery's Mission Strategy Fund. Greg told the meeting of Presbytery last month that the fund supported church plants and congregations that move forward in mission as well as the position of Rev Maggie de Leeuw, who is our Mission Development Officer. He said there was currently a shortfall in this account, but Greg is confident, that with the help of the Presbytery congregations it will end up in surplus.



## ABORIGINAL CONGRESS MOVES FORWARD

She told the meeting that Presbyteries were set up in Queensland and the NT to facilitate congregations and accept candidates for ministry. But these matters were left to the regional councils in other states, but probably never formally recognised.

She noted that Bundjalung members of Congress were especially encouraged by the eight day coach tour, 'Walking On Bundjalung Country' held earlier this year. Congress has five ministry centres in Bundjalung Country and is currently considering creation of a UAICC/NSW/ACT Bundjalung Ministry Reference Group. The group would also include representatives from Presbytery and Lismore Regional Mission and would enable the Regional Council to be more aware of recent initiatives and activities.

## EvangelismSHIFT

**THE Far North Coast Presbytery has agreed to fund all congregations into a new evangelism programme that is unlike any that have gone before.**

**Titled EvangelismSHIFT** the programme is an activity of Ambassadors for Christ International Australia and in its first two years of operation has shown how Church can seize the day and make evangelism happen.

Mission Development Officer for the FNC, Rev Maggie de Leeuw, said the initiative involved a two year journey to help us change our culture and grow us into kingdom builders

“It is a discipleship journey that leads into a lifestyle.

The average mainline church has lost vision and direction and is struggling to keep its eyes above water.

And this affects all of us”, Maggie said.

“The heartache of not growing forward as God’s disciples, facing adding and shrinking numbers and if something doesn’t happen soon, there will be no Uniting Church.

“We have reached the crossroads but not the one you might think.

God is not finished with us yet.

Nor has He given up on us.

Maggie said it is not our role to build the Church,

“That responsibility is God’s!

But He has a call on our lives and He has called us.

Matthew 28 reminds us that we are to go into the world.

So our crossroads is not about saving the church.

Ours is to leave the building to Jesus while we go and build the Kingdom of God.

“Church builders”, Maggie says, “are concerned about self and self preservation but Kingdom builders embrace each new day with the prayer ‘Help me Lord to follow You today.’

“It is an adventure seeking to see when Jesus is and following Him.

EvangelismSHIFT trains us as disciples in order to make disciples ~ to help others become followers of Jesus.



And it makes us aware of how easy it is to make disciples.”

Presbytery has agreed to pay the upfront costs of \$5,500. Congregations will have a small amount to pay for the materials and involvement.

Six meetings will be held in the first year and this will involve leaders of the church.

The second year will also include other participants.

The meeting will be held in a central venue within the Presbytery.

Maggie said, the opportunity to bring new life was here. We now need to seize the day.

**If your church is interested in participating  
in EvangelismSHIFT  
contact the Presbytery Office  
or Rev Maggie today**

## NORTH WEST MERGER

We are excited to report that the Urbenville/Woodenbong congregations have now merged with Kyogle and will come under the leadership of one Church Council. The new banner under which they will minister will be: *Richmond and Upper Clarence Multi-Centre Congregations*. Our prayers are with Rev. Peter Overton and the new team as they grow together in grace.