

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of several wheat stalks. The stalks are arranged diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right. They have long, thin, golden-brown awns and heads of grain that are a mix of green and yellow, indicating they are ripe. The lighting is bright, creating soft shadows on the white background.

# **Mission Areas**

# **The story so far**

**Anglican Diocese of Sydney**  
**October 2012**

## What are Mission Areas all about?

The basic concept of Mission Areas arose from the Mission Board which has the task of looking at the big picture of our mission in relation to the whole diocese.

The great goal of Mission Areas, as the name suggests, is making new disciples of Jesus Christ. We need to see the geographical area of our diocese as a huge mission field, and so, with the help of Anglicare Research, we have identified about 20 areas, appointed a leader in each, with the task of gathering the ministers and churches together to look at their part of the mission field to understand the challenges and to identify opportunities.

There is no doubt that the priority of the local congregation is a right one and a great strength of our diocese. Yet at the same time we can be “reinventing the wheel” over and over again, forgetting that there are great benefits in being in closer partnership with one another, sharing resources, experience and encouragement. The culture of western individualism which affects us all, does not help us to be as concerned for the growth of the gospel in other churches as much as we should. One minister remarked to me: “Before Mission Areas came along I didn’t have any idea what was happening in the parish down the road, and now I have a real and prayerful interest for that minister and the church.”

There are many aspects to the Mission Areas initiative, but if I had to put it in one sentence, it would be: **Mission Areas is an initiative that seeks to promote gospel partnerships between churches (and between churches and our diocesan organisations) so that we become more effective in proclaiming the Lord Jesus to our community and making new disciples and establishing them in God’s church.**

In other words, Mission Areas is not a program of events, but actually something deeper and much more difficult. It is a cultural-mindset change, which focuses not only on “how can I grow my local church?” (a legitimate and right focus), but also asks the broader Kingdom question: “how can we work together so that more people in our diocese hear about Christ and respond to him?” In other words, I become concerned that all our churches and ministries flourish, not just mine, and all for God’s glory and Kingdom. I hope you can see that this is therefore very much a long term project, because it requires the building of trust and partnership. Mission Areas is not a quick fix, but a prolonged commitment to help each other be more effective in mission.

How shall we reach more people? Well, there will be different strategies and approaches depending on geography, socio economic conditions, local cultural values, the history of the churches, and many other factors. That is why Mission Areas is in one sense a “local strategy”. The ministers and church leaders in a particular area are the ones who understand the “local” best, and together they work out the next steps.

## The story so far then...

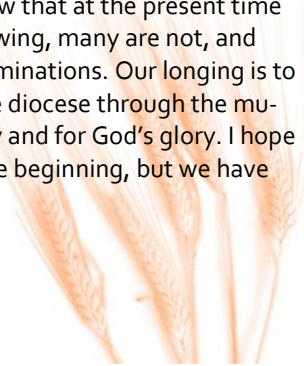
In the first half of 2010, the Archbishop and I, along with Russell Powell and Anglicare Research staff, made a road tour around the diocese, conducting 18 area meetings to explain the concept, answer questions, and ask for suggestions for Mission Area leaders. The second half of the year saw the appointment of those leaders and initial training. It was important to take the time to establish the structure and leadership carefully.

Towards the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, the Mission Area leaders spent many hours, visiting each minister personally, asking how Mission Areas could help them in their mission, what we could profitably do together (and such visitation continues in some areas today). Mission Area meetings began, initially with the Rectors as they are the leaders of mission in their parishes, and over time, others have joined in. Out of these group meetings have come all manner of strategies, activities and training. I find it very encouraging to see how each area has decided on very different courses of action. It shows that they are thinking locally about what is needed and what is possible in their current circumstances. Yes, some areas seem to be moving ahead very well, others seem slower off the mark, but again we need to remember that we are building true partnership for the gospel's sake, not just running events.

My role has been to support the leaders and areas as much as I am able, by finding resources and training, giving advice and guidance, and co-ordinating the initiative as a whole. The Archbishop has taken an active role, and is present at all our leaders' meeting. This initiative is a big ask for the area leaders and I want to express publicly my thanks to them all. Some have up to 20 parishes to work with in their area. I also want to express my thanks to the many partners who have come alongside to help with Mission Areas, such as Tim Sims and his team, Youthworks, Anglicare, Mary Andrews College and others, indeed all of our organisations have been very supportive.

I have asked each leader to give some personal reflections on the nature of their area, the kind of priorities they see, and some of the things their area has been doing and planning. Our trust is in the Lord of the harvest, yet we know that at the present time the mission field is hard ploughing. Some churches are growing, many are not, and there is much transfer growth between churches and denominations. Our longing is to see more people become new followers of Christ across the diocese through the mutual encouragement of working together voluntarily, gladly and for God's glory. I hope in the following reflections, you will see that yes it is just the beginning, but we have made an encouraging start.

**Bishop Ivan Lee**  
**Co-ordinator for Mission Areas**



## **Blacktown-Penrith Mission Area**

The Blacktown-Penrith Mission Area covers 17 parishes across 25 kms in the Western Region of Sydney Diocese. It is a diverse area in ethnic mix, social-economic status and church life.

The first Mission Area Leader was David Clarke. David's approach was to meet with each senior minister to ascertain the resources each parish both needs and can offer. Some parishes set up joint training programmes for their churches.

When David Clarke moved to Hoxton Park last year, David Mears and Michael Robinson were appointed Co-Mission Area Leaders. Sharing the leadership makes a lot of sense given the geographic size and diversity of the area. We've divided the area into two clusters – Dave looks after the Western end and Michael the Eastern end. Early this year we put on a lunch for all ministry staff in the area. We were thrilled that just about every parish was represented, with around 40 people attending. The Archbishop came and addressed us, reminding us of the purpose and value of Mission Areas. Dave and Michael also shared something of their own vision and heart for the area.

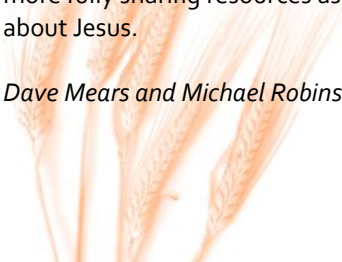
A highlight this year was the Effective Ministry Conference held at Rooty Hill. Although this was organised by the Western Region (and encompassed other Mission Areas), it gave us an opportunity to meet with a cross section of folk in our particular Mission Area.

Since then the two clusters have been meeting separately. The first step in working together is for ministers to get to know each other better and build trusting relationships. Then we can explore what sort of things we can do together. That may be the simple sharing of resources and ideas ("How do you follow up new comers?" or "What are you preaching on at the moment?" and so on). Or organising training for ministers and parishioners across parishes. Or engaging in some mission activities together.

We are still thinking through our direction for 2013, but we expect to extend our meetings to parishioners who want to be involved.

We have loved getting to know the ministers and staff in our clusters, encouraging each other and praying for each other. We look forward to enjoying the benefits of more fully sharing resources as we help each other reach our area with the good news about Jesus.

*Dave Mears and Michael Robinson*



## Blue Mountain Mission Area

The Blue Mountains Mission Area covers the churches from Glenbrook in the lower mountains to Lithgow in the west. The geography of the area presents special challenges as well as facilitating certain types of ministry.

People don't see themselves as part of a suburb in the midst of suburbs, but rather members of a village or town community. This can make connecting with the community easier as you see and mix with locals more than you might in the suburbs of Sydney. The ribbon like geography means churches don't always have large populations to draw from and it also contributes to the uniqueness of each centre.

Over the last few years the churches have been working together on a range of initiatives including joint sermon series, shared bible study material and combined training days. One highlight was a bold initiative to shut down local services in the upper mountain's churches and meet at one venue for a one off combined celebration service. This was a great success and we are currently planning to repeat the event to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the crossing of the Blue Mountains and so plug into other community events set for that time.

There has also been a developing relationship between the churches and Anglicare in Parish Partnerships that has been greatly facilitated by the Mission Area forums for interaction.

A recent combined church's prayer meeting for the Mission Area was a great success and more are planned for the future. The interaction between members of diverse churches at events like this and the training event we held, are a great encouragement to all, as challenges and ideas are shared and prayed about. The fellowship of the gospel we share, as church members from diverse congregations talk about the same bible study material they are using and sermons they are hearing, builds a unity and a real sense of being co-workers in the gospel.

Recent discussions amongst the clergy about the local National Church Life Survey results and the issues resulting from it will be further explored in think tanks in days to come. There are also plans to hold a mission across the churches as well as to continue to work on the profile of the churches in local media.

The last two years have seen the employment of a youth and ministry worker shared amongst three churches of the upper mountains. This initiative is not without it's drawbacks but it has meant that churches that could not possibly pay for a worker on their own have been able to be part of a job sharing arrangement that has seen youth ministries established in one church and strengthened in others.

We are excited by the potential there is for even deeper collaboration with the sharing of resources, ideas, programs and personnel and we look to God to bless our efforts to bring the gospel the Blue Mountains and beyond.

*Ray Robinson*

## Camden-Campbelltown Mission Area

Our Mission Area covers a large and diverse collection of parishes from Glenfield to Wilton that are both truly suburban, truly rural and truly new. Our area is socio-economically diverse, culturally diverse and religiously diverse - and increasingly so as more and more migrants join us in the mighty South West of Sydney.

During the first part of our life cycle as a Mission Area we were ably led by Deryck Howell (Rosemeadow) who gathered us to pray, to think, to listen to a variety of speakers and to network. These were valuable times that built a firm foundation for some new directions we are hoping to take through the remainder of 2012 and beyond. These initial meetings helped us get to know one another and what we were doing in ministry and the issues we were facing as we sought to grow. There is a group of "Westside M5" ministers that meets quarterly and the youth ministers get together regularly too.

Following our Regional Conference this year, we have met once for training and to set a new and exciting direction for our Mission Area. In terms of training, Simon Hingston (Ingleburn AM) helped us see how we can use ABS and NCLS data to inform our ministry. We get so much information – now we know how to interpret and use it!

In terms of new direction, we set in place two things that we will do in the next six months. First, we will be attempting to gather people to pray – either in person or by sending out prayer letters and emails so that people can be praying within our churches for our area as a whole.

Secondly, we have created a subcommittee of the Mission Area that will be seeking to identify areas and groups within Campbelltown-Camden that are lost tribes and deserts that need the Gospel. The goal is that we as a Mission Area might consider how we might work together to expand the reach of the Gospel in our area. This group will gather information from the ABS, NCLS and Senior Ministers and seek to amass a comprehensive list of opportunities that could be taken in our area. Then we will work out what we think are the top ten priorities in our area. We will then meet again as a whole Mission Area to consider what can be done in any of those areas collaboratively or by individual parishes with prayer and support of others, We are all very aware that Campbelltown-Camden has one of the lowest "Anglican attending" percentages in Sydney. We are committed to prayerfully preaching the Gospel to see God work in reaching those who don't yet know Jesus.

I have been really encouraged by each of the Ministers in our Mission Area and look forward to spending time with them as we think together about reaching the lost. I have much to learn from each of them and give great thanks for Deryck and his wisdom.

*Nigel Fortescue*

## Canterbury-Bankstown Mission Area

The Canterbury-Bankstown Mission Area includes a very diverse collection of suburbs. From those which have undergone gentrification (Marrickville) to stable suburbs of 'Anglo' populations (Panania) to those which see high numbers of people new to Australia (Campsie and Lakemba). In this sense the Mission Area is a microcosm of the diversity of our Diocese.

The Mission Area contains suburbs and city-centres which provide an exciting glimpse into the future of Sydney. While not totally unique in terms of the numbers of people from non-English speaking backgrounds, it is an area which contains a number of 'landing places' for new migrants. It is also home to some of the newest waves of people groups coming to Australia. For example, people from Bangladesh, Syria and Afghanistan. The needs these people have, present both opportunities and challenges to our churches.

The Mission Area initiative has found expression in Canterbury-Bankstown in three ways: Mission Area Meetings, Prayer and Combined Events.

### *Mission Area Meetings*

Mission Area meetings have gone through a couple of different phases since Mission Areas were established. The first phase involved quarterly gatherings of ministers for input on topics designed to help rectors be better leaders of the Mission of their Parish. To this end, Steve Abbott, Andrew Katay and Matt Teakle (Anglicare) presented to the group in 2010. Steve spoke on 'Developing an evangelistic church culture' and Andrew spoke on 'Church systems'.

Matt Teakle talked to us about the DnA workshops.

Attendance was quite good at these events.

More recently however meetings have dispensed with external presenters and have focused on rectors sharing their plans of the mission of their parishes. These plans for mission and ministry within the parish could be big-picture plans (Mission and Vision statements) or more specific aspects of the overall plan for mission (eg., outreach or welcoming). The willingness of ministers to share their plans has been built upon a growing sense of trust within the Mission Area.

The focus in these meetings has been on:

Praying earnestly

Planning carefully

Sharing honestly

Implementing with accountability

### *Prayer*

Ministers and ministry workers in the western end of the Mission Area have been gathering weekly for prayer during 2012. The focus for prayer has been Muslim outreach

and the work of Margaret Powell as well as similar work being done through Greenacre and Lakemba Anglican churches. Apart from the value of prayer, this has had significant impact in deepening relationships between the leaders of the various churches from Lakemba to Georges Hall.

Also, on September 12th two prayer meetings were held to which members of churches from across the Mission Area were invited. 40 people attended across the two meetings.

### *Combined Events*

In March 2012, Dr. Russell Clark spoke at the Yagoona Senior Citizens' centre for a combined Seniors outreach event. Over 50 people were in attendance. This event ran very smoothly through partnership with 'Next Phase Ministries'.

While there were few non-churched people who attended, the positive response to the event suggests this is something to try again in 2013.

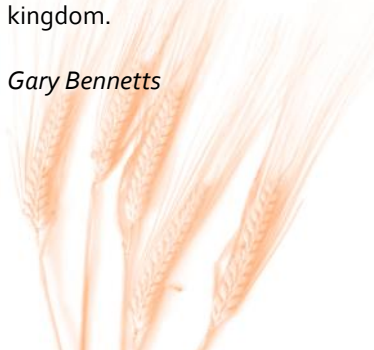
South West Youth has also been established through Mission Areas. SWY events have been held each term and involve youth groups meeting together on a Friday night (usually 100-120 in attendance) and then the youth ministry leaders coming together the next morning for training.

The Friday nights involved singing, a Bible talk, fun and food. For youth ministries which usually number in the single digits through to about 30, coming together as a larger group provides a great encouragement to the young people.

The Saturday morning training sessions for leaders looked at topics such as running a Jesus-focused youth ministry, preaching to youth, discipling youth and the use of drama and games in youth ministry.

In all these things, God has graciously promoted fellowship between churches and ministers that we trust will continue to grow over the coming years. As it does, we will see more ideas and initiatives developed to help sharpen ministers in their roles as the leaders of the church's mission as well as identifying ways that churches can work together to reach people with the gospel and train up believers in the service of Christ's kingdom.

*Gary Bennetts*





## Hills-Hawkesbury Mission Area

The Hills and Hawkesbury Mission Area covers a very large area spanning highly urbanised parishes such as Crossway at Carlingford through to semi-rural and rural areas around Wilberforce, Richmond and Kurrajong. However, many of the existing semi-rural areas are destined to be developed in the coming years, presenting a range of opportunities and challenges for mission and ministry.

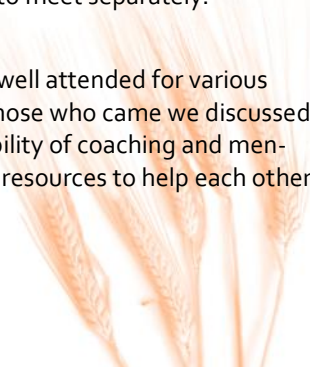
Over the last year there were a number of personal and group meetings, conferences and consultations with the Senior Ministers. The Senior Ministers are the gatekeepers to growth and mission development in the diocese and parishes, so a focus on them has been the initial priority. Regular group meetings have been difficult to get off the ground but hopefully this will improve with time.

I have met with Senior Ministers individually to help them improve mission in their parishes. Many of them need encouragement and a sounding board to help them in the task of mission. In between meetings, there have been many emails and conversations about how to keep mission on the agenda.

Last year, a two day Mission Area Conference was run at Chaldercot where Senior Ministers were challenged by Tim Sims, Al Stewart, Rick Lewis, Ivan Lee and Youthworks staff. We looked at welcoming ministries, strategic moves to grow your church, starting new congregations, networking, peer mentoring and the need to develop further children and youth ministries.

Ivan Lee and I organised an Effective Ministry Under God Conference at Rooty Hill earlier this year to which all the churches from five Mission Areas were invited. It was a very successful day with 240 people attending, and it was exciting to see the large number of lay people from so many churches. We were challenged to be in mission mode, to understand both our weaknesses and strengths as churches, and we were given a range of strategies, creative ideas and resources by various ministers and lay leaders. There was also opportunity for each Mission Area to meet separately.

Local Mission Area meetings have unfortunately not been well attended for various reasons, including the busyness of clergy. However, with those who came we discussed greenfields church plants over the next 15 years, the possibility of coaching and mentoring, and the networking of ministers and the sharing of resources to help each other in ministry and mission.



Because of geography and the large number of parishes in the Mission Area, we have recently formed two clusters (Hills and Hawkesbury) which will allow more local meetings, as well as the opportunity to meet all together as one area. Greg Peisley was appointed to lead the Hawkesbury cluster.

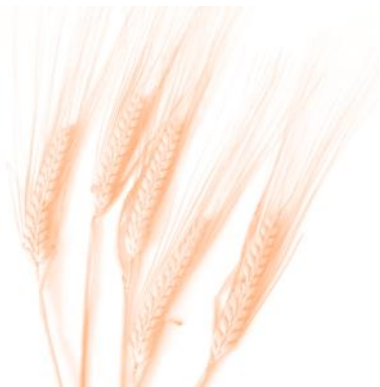
*Geoff Bates*

### **Hawkesbury Cluster**

We have only just started meeting, but in our first meeting as senior ministers, we thought about how to keep prayer a priority in our ministries without neglecting the Word. We spent time discussing how we were going personally in ministry (physically, emotionally and spiritually), how to persevere in the task of evangelism, how to support, encourage & hold each other accountable in mission.

We decided to include other staff at meetings when we have a guest trainer and socials, and to explore the concept of coaching, and strategies for making disciples. We plan to have monthly meetings at different venues and areas we hope to address include: Philosophy of ministry; Understanding our Mission Area; Knowing our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities; Using the NCLS material, Strategies for evangelism; How to motivate our leadership teams in mission; Sharing training opportunities; Shared mission activities; and Prayer Gatherings.

*Greg Peisley*



## Inner West Mission Area

There are 17 parishes in the Mission Area (up by 1 since inception – St. Peters). Of these 17 three are branch churches and there have been two church plants in the area in the last few years.

Demographically the Mission Area has two halves: 1) the inner west grungy, Newtown half, which is gentrifying but not in an Eastern Suburbs or North Shore way. It is has increasing young professionals moving in, and is politically left wing. 2) The Asian half from Ashfield westward. We will need more Asian workers to move into this part of the world.

### *What we've done since July 2010*

I met with the rectors one on one and will continue to do so. rectors meet four times a year to cover a range of topics. Together we have exegeted the Inner West culture (or at least begun to) analysing census and NCLs data, compiling a profile of the typical Inner Westie from this and our collective experience. At our meetings we've had presentations from Matthias Media; the regional manager Anglicare (much more work could be done here); heard from Jim Ramsay on being a welcoming church; and heard from Andrew Nixon - Year 13.

As clergy we have had workshops on our small groups especially in the light of research that suggests we are failing to grow our people through them. Another workshop was conducted on dealing with difficult staff & the art of a job description. An interesting incidental arose from our first meeting where the government solar panel scheme was mentioned in passing – as a result 4 church jumped onto the scheme.

As churches we have also met with lay people to pray together for the mission of the Inner West Anglican churches. This was a tremendously encouraging evening and two more are planned for 2013. Furthermore a series of training nights were held around the Mission Area with lay people on welcoming. Each participating church was visited by a mystery worshipper and a report written and given to the church so as to help them work and improve.

Together our churches pay for Easter and Christmas advertising in local Paper (including churches not in Mission Area)

One church decided to give \$5K to the ministry of the Mission Area. The money was directed to two new ministries: one being one of the church plants, the other a new para-church ministry to the emergency services.

Coming up will be an examination of how to improve our ministry to youth. Graham Stanton from Youthworks will join rectors to explore ways of collaborating and supporting one another in this. Further two of the youth ministers in the area wish to form a network for those conducting youth ministry in the Mission Area. Please pray for this.

### *Tribes and Deserts*

We need to look at the following tribes and deserts in the future. Geographically we could fit a ministry on the edges of the Mission Area in Alexandria and Homebush/Newton areas. Furthermore, we have too little Asian work going on in the area for the numbers represented in the population. We need also to explore what could be done in the Anglican school in the area.

### *Tried but Failed*

We have also tried but failed to get momentum for 'Back to church Sunday' events. Furthermore, I need to renew efforts to build a database for School scripture with the hope of identifying the holes.

As a Mission Area our strengths are the strong rectors; resurgent ministries & parishes with energy, ideas, enthusiasm, and new initiatives in previously dead/struggling churches. Our challenges are business as churches and rectors in their own programs and breaking existing patterns so that we work together under the theory that the sum of the parts is greater than the whole.

A threat to all our ministries is the strident atheism of the area and Sydney in general. We need to be increasingly present in the lives of the community so they will see our love and hear our life changing message.

### *Antony Baraclough*



## **Liverpool Mission Area**

I was appointed Mission Area leader for Liverpool after Bruce Dingwall left the area to be rector of a parish in the Sutherland Mission Area. Although my time as leader has been relatively short, I have gained some insight into the culture of our churches – here are some thoughts.

The rectors in the area have been meeting together for years at Thomas Hassall College so most of them knew each other quite well and enjoy being together. This has probably contributed in a positive way to there being no real "competition" between churches and that allows us to get on with mission.

We have been able to do some things together such as the Safe Ministry training and advertising in the local newspaper. Also a number of "STAND" youth events have been run, and the most recent of these went well with Sam Lowe (Chatswood) speaking about the cost of being a disciple. It was a great talk for both believers and unbelievers. Anecdotally, Christian young people who brought their non-Christian friends from

school found it a good time, and some of those friends are now coming on an ad-hoc basis to youth group. In terms of working together, every church except one has been involved which has been a tremendous result, and I think that the teenagers have loved it and have benefited from being with our youth on such a large scale.

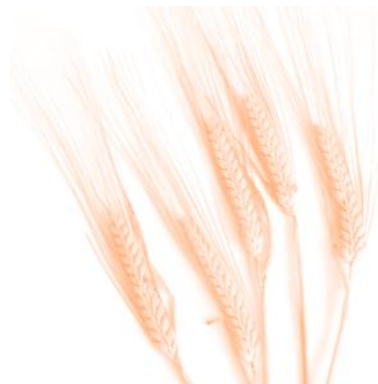
*Discussion about the real need for church planting*

We are only 8 churches and three church plants to cover 350,000 people. I suspect we could plant 8 churches and still only scratch the surface. We have all agreed to ask Bruce Hall from ENC to come out and talk with us about the possibility of church planting in the future.

The ministers have been meeting quarterly, but we have planned to change the format for 2013 to three meetings next year but also with a longer 2 full days meeting. The areas we are planning to look at next year include: church planting with ENC; the Tim Sims material, the minister's diary, mission planning, discipleship training, establishing Anglicare counselling in our churches, ESL outreach, and evangelism events.

I am excited at the potential for mission in our area.

*Stuart Milne*



## Lower North Shore Mission Area

The Lower North Shore Mission Area stretches from Chatswood to the Bridge comprising the 17 parishes in the old North Sydney & Willoughby deaneries (Artarmon, Chatswood, Cremorne, Greenwich, Kirribilli, Lane Cove & Mowbray, Lavender Bay, Longueville, Mosman - St Clement's, Mosman - St Luke's, Naremburn-Cammeray, Neutral Bay, North Sydney, Northbridge, Roseville East, Willoughby, Willoughby East). By Sydney standards this is a high concentration of churches in a small space.

For various historical reasons though, there has not been a lot of partnership between these churches - most act pretty independently, there is some variety in size and churchmanship, and some are in geographically distinct areas. There are exceptions - over the years St Thomas North Sydney have very generously sent many people to 're-plant' a number of churches. The Chatswood CBD is surrounded by smaller suburban churches and is growing much quicker than ministry to it.

Despite these differences there are some challenges common to us. There is very little growing youth ministry. Cross cultural ministry is still a largely untapped opportunity and responsibility. Most of the churches are on very tight budgets - any needing to rent housing face very high staffing costs. As a wealthy area the ministry for all of us is one of trying to push camels through the eye of a needle.

Rick Smith was the Mission Area Leader until February of this year. Rick has kindly continued to run prayer meetings each month. Gathering to pray is tremendously important and a great encouragement for those able to come. It has cemented my belief that the challenges we face are spiritual ones that require prayer together.

Since taking on the role I have been meeting one to one with rectors. It is clear from those meetings that each rector sees great potential in partnership even if there isn't always agreement as to what that should look like in the particular parish.

We're also having four sessions for rectors this year (2 done so far) on Lessons from London with Mark Thompson , Steve Kryger on communicating Jesus social media etc, cross cultural work with Graeme & Cathy Smith, youth ministry.

We're also gathering groups to pray for youth and cross cultural work. In November we'll have the first ever gathering of youth ministry leaders from across the Mission Area for pizza and prayer. This will give them a chance to be encouraged by seeing the work beyond their immediate setting. They'll be able to swap stories and ideas, build networks, and pray for each other.

While there will be help to equip in specific useful skills, they are also given a chance to

share ideas and grow in trust as we see the common mission field before us. I'm convinced though that this growth in trust is a long term thing. Partnership depends on trust. Trust is built out of relationships. Relationships come from people being together and speaking and praying and getting to know one another. For us to see real progress will take time and a deliberate strategy to keep giving opportunities for those relationships to grow.

*Michael Kellahan*



## **Parramatta Mission Area**

The Parramatta Mission Area encompasses churches from Lidcombe to Toongabbie. It is an extremely diverse area in so many different ways - in particular culturally. We all remember that at our first Senior Ministers meeting, just over two years ago, we needed name tags!

Since that time, extraordinary camaraderie has formed as we have been the beneficiaries of being a pilot area in partnership with the 'Exploring Effective Ministry under God' team. It has been a great privilege to be forced to think deeply and critically about the effectiveness of our respective churches. Many have been freed from the tyranny of trying to do it all to having a framework about the most important areas to focus on (all quite tailored for different churches in different situations), with God's help and blessing.

We have had several meetings each year, all quite well attended. At first, we were all learning and reflecting on material that we had rarely thought about before – understanding the cultural trends and changes, reflecting on why churches and ministry has changed, thinking about the needs of a typical person who needs to know Jesus, etc. As time has gone on, we have been trained both to apply such insights to our own churches and also to assist one another to do so. Sometimes these insights have been of quite direct help in, for example, thinking through the importance, practicalities and systems of welcoming visitors to church. Other benefits have been more indirect – helping one another to become more conscious and less driven by the myriad of things that make little difference to fostering mature and new disciples of Jesus.

The growing trust and sense of partnership is unmistakable. Knowledge and expertise is now being shared, for the benefit of seeing more people won for Jesus. While our focus so far has been on the great need for the training of Senior Ministers, it is my

hope, as such trust and partnership continues and even increases, that even closer working relationships will be formed.

Without the opportunity for this Mission Area, it is hard to see how many of these benefits would have come about.

*Raj Gupta*



## **Ryde Mission Area**

Ryde Mission Area comprises eleven parish areas from Ermington/West Ryde on the west to Beecroft/North Epping in the north to Hunters Hill/Gladesville in the east. Within the Mission Area are the large shopping precincts of Top Ryde and Macquarie, the education hub at Macquarie University and the expanding 'technology' business district around Macquarie and North Ryde. It is growing and ethnically diverse region that has changed markedly in the last decade.

After a slow start the Mission Area has started to gain some traction and a positive sense of cooperation and mutual support has been established among the churches. Several partnerships are evolving where larger churches assist in practical ways smaller churches nearby, such as between Putney and Gladesville. Ideas and resources have been spread between churches in areas such as welcoming, preaching programs, youth ministry and small group leader training. Currently we meet as a whole team once/term and for prayer together once/term together with smaller gatherings of different ministers for particular tasks. A pleasing feature of our Mission Area is the interest and engagement from assistant ministers in the Mission Area work as well as the senior ministers.

The vision for the Ryde Mission Area is several fold:

Firstly our aim is to grow every church in the area so that it is shining brightly and drawing many to Christ and into fellowship. We want the 'spiritual footprint' to be large in each suburb and the church known and valued in each community. Ministers are meeting together to work on

- ◆ Improved welcoming and engagement of newcomers
- ◆ Strengthen small groups ministries and leader training
- ◆ 'connecting' and evangelism in the local community



Secondly reorganising both the church diary and the minister's diary so that more resources are channelled to the key tasks that grow disciples and reach more people for Christ. NCLS data reveals that all our churches must work at deepening the spiritual health of member so that more are captured by the vision of goodness of God, the Great Commission and are using their gifts in joyful service of Christ. This is hard work and will take time to 'reorient' to a more missional focus.

Thirdly, working together and individually to reach the area with the good news of Christ through new initiatives into schools, the technology/business districts, ethic groups that are currently not represented in our churches. While we are some way from any 'combined' ministries the ground work is being done and the different ideas and opportunities are being canvassed.

Fourthly, increased prayerfulness and dependence upon God in all things. The Mission Area ministers meet four times each year for breakfast and prayer together with Glenn. These have been rich times of prayer and fellowship between churches and ministries. In October a prayer breakfast is planned for lay people from across all our churches to pray for the mission to Ryde and in each church.

Ryde Mission Area has been greatly blessed by the support of Tim Sims and team at 'Effective Ministries Under God' who join us at each Mission Area meeting and share research data and ideas gathered from other churches and Mission Areas. The team has been instrumental in challenging us to take seriously the many problems we face and yet wonderfully encouraging and inspiring in exhorting and equipping us to face these with fresh ideas and renewed trust in our powerful and gracious God. Many thanks to Tim, Sarie, Guy and Peter and to St Anne's Ryde who host our meetings each term.

*Phil Wheeler*



## Shoalhaven Mission Area

The Shoalhaven Mission Area encompasses the area from Berry, in the north, to the parish of Ulladulla in the south. It includes the spectacular scenery of Kangaroo Valley and the amazing white sands of Hyams Beach, Jervis Bay. While it is a holiday destination for many it has a resident population of about 100,000 people. Many of these people do not have a personal relationship with the living God.

For a long time the Anglican ministers of the Shoalhaven have had a close and supportive relationship with one another, seeking to uphold each other in their ministries, but the advent of Mission Areas has forged a stronger working relationship and collaboration to explore how we can engage more effectively in mission in this beautiful part of God's world. We meet regularly and continue to ask "How can we better reach the tribes and deserts in this area?"

Our earliest endeavours as a Mission Area revolved around youth ministry, desiring to have a greater impact and to reach young people in the Shoalhaven more effectively with the good news of Jesus Christ and to see lives shaped by the gospel and the values of the Kingdom of God. Our youth groups, from across the Shoalhaven, meet regularly together to be taught from the word of God, sing His praises, pray and celebrate our lives together. We have also held a number of training days to better equip the leaders of our groups.

The Mission Area group has also been keenly interested and engaged in providing SRE to our local high schools. Two of our members have acted as Chairperson of SECET (Shoalhaven Employers of Christian Education Teachers) and there has been significant input into and support in the operation of this body.

Time was also spent early in the life of the Mission Area identifying whom we can be working in partnership with. One outcome of this was collaborating with Mary Andrews College to run some of their courses in Nowra and make this training more accessible to people in the Shoalhaven. These courses have been well attended.

Another relationship which has been strengthened is with our local Anglican Schools Corporation schools, NAC and SAS. Clergy regularly take devotions and we are keen to work with the school chaplains to better reach this mission field.

Mission-focussed thinking has seen our Nowra-centred parishes work together to provide ministry to three further nursing homes. These parishes have also played a significant role in reinvigorating the ministry at Culburra and Callala. There is also ongoing discussion and partnership in the Mission Area to explore how we can better do mission minded ministry amongst the many seniors of the Shoalhaven.

The Mission Area group has also played a key role in a church plant at Vincentia in the Huskisson Parish. It would have been difficult to begin this church plant without this assistance and the Mission Area's support will continue at least in the short term.

There has also been prayerful and financial support of Indigenous Ministry through ShACC. The Mission Area remains committed to supporting this ministry to the indigenous people of the Shoalhaven and longs to see it firmly established and flourishing.

Prison ministry is another area in which the Mission Area has had input, with Anglicare and All Saints Nowra working on and winning the tender to provide Chaplaincy to the new prison at South Nowra. For reasons outside our control further progress has been difficult but there remains a will to see how we can better serve in this mission field.

The Mission Area initiative has given added impetus to our relationships with both Anglicare and All Saints Community Care and as a result there is a stronger sense of partnership along with tangible outcomes. We would expect to see these partnerships develop further in the future.

The Mission Area meetings have been a valuable place of support for our local Australian Defence Force Chaplain - NAVY. One concrete outcome is the recruitment and preparation of one of our senior ministers as a R.A.N. Reserve Chaplain.

The Mission Area has also been instrumental in conferences for both women and men in the Shoalhaven. In its second year the Women's SWITCH conference hosted some 350 participants. The men are lagging a bit but this year's conference aims to encourage and equip men to reach other men for Christ.

We continue to look for opportunities to encourage and work together in mission. There are no doubt things that have been missed but the above outlines some of the highlights so far.

*Marty Davis*



## Southern Highlands Mission Area

The Southern Highlands area is a distinct geographical unit. There is a division between those who have lived in the area for generations and new arrivals. Thus the "locals" know those who are the real locals. There is a strong sense of local communities and of "the highlands". There is still some attachment to churches as "our church" by people who do not attend.

There are more people of retired age than the state average as people sell their Sydney properties and "cash up" by buying the cheaper housing in the area. Seniors ministry is strong in our area and we see people returning to church life as they move into a new community.

As well as retired people moving in there are young families moving into the area as people make lifestyle choices and move away from the metropolitan area. Playgroups have been very effective in reaching young families who move into a new community.

Youth work is difficult as most of the bright eighteen to twenty five year olds move to city to pursue tertiary education. Thus we have to do youth ministry differently and the youth leaders are often older. The year 13 program run by Youthworks has been helpful in keeping older teens in ministry in our church and we are keen to develop this more in the future. There are combined youth events in the Southern Highlands and we hope to run some combined youth leadership training in the future.

The Mission Area is the same as the old area deanery. There are five parishes and fifteen churches as most parishes have branch churches. The concept of a Mission Area has given our meetings more of a sense of purpose. As the ministers met together we have been encouraged to think more about mission in our parishes for the whole Southern Highlands area.

We have run some combined training events as a Mission Area. There have been two day conferences run by Mary Andrews College on improving pastoral care in our churches and communities. There is also an annual CMS conference.

We had a meeting of all the ministry staff and Parish Councils. At this meeting networks were formed so that people in similar ministries could meet and discuss particular issues.

We have identified the registered club culture as an area for possible church plants. For example the Mittagong RSL club has more than 15,000 members from across the highlands. The pub and club culture is not much touched by churches. There has been a beginning at Mittagong RSL where a small group is meeting.

We have discussed the resourcing of branch churches. We have a number of small branch churches and they are draining on the Senior Ministers. We have talked about

the possible sharing of resources from bigger churches in terms of preaching. We have also discussed how to more effectively reach out to local village communities through the strengthening outreach ministries of branch churches.

*Richard Mills*



## **St George Mission Area**

Our Mission Area, one of 3 in the Georges River Region, covers 17 parishes, 3 local councils, and a huge number of people groups. Geographically, we stretch from the coast to Riverwood, and from the Georges River to the M5.

Over the past 2 years, we have been involved in prayer, partnership, training and outreach. The rectors of each parish gather together regularly to share ideas, to encourage and pray for one another, and to train. This year, Col Marshall has been our trainer. Col has also spent time training individual churches, and we have run 2 combined training nights. Such topics have included: how do we use our small groups for mission, and using one to one Bible reading for evangelism.

Each time we gather, we also consider how to best partner with other organizations, and have been joined in our meetings by 10 or so different diocesan groups.

The great highlight in 2011 was our combined outreach nights. On 4 evenings over 2 successive weekends, around 2500 people gathered and heard the gospel from John Dickson (3 nights) and from Dave Miers (Youth night). We are repeating the youth night this year in late October.

It has been exciting to see camaraderie, trust and partnership grow over these 2 years. Together we are able to do ministries and mission we could not do on our own. For example, combined outreach events and combined youth ministries are now happening, and are going well.

It is a great encouragement to share the joys and struggles of gospel ministry with friends, and to continue to talk through how we can best partner together to see mission happen.

*Mat Yeo*



## Sutherland Mission Area

The Sutherland Mission Area is home to 220,000 people - from Stanwell Park to Sylvania, and from Menai to Cronulla. The mission field is large, but we are blessed with significant resources – an average weekly church attendance of 3500 adults, served by 35 full time staff and 16 church meeting places across 10 parishes.

The rectors meet regularly for prayer, planning, encouragement and to learn from each other. We are united and pleased to work together in the common purpose of connecting the people around us to Christ and his Church. Some of the ministers also meet separately for individual mentoring.

Some the things we have talked about...

- Given that most of our churches have been stable in number for several years, how can we reach and retain more people?
- The Tim Sims "Effective Ministry" material and its implications
- Cross Cultural ministry in our area
- The pros and cons of different models of staffing

This fellowship is leading to significant co-operation between churches. Emails are regularly exchanged inviting members of neighbouring parishes to benefit from special events. This year Miranda and Cronulla shared a combined Moore College Mission. Churches are also sharing preachers, equipment, ideas for mission and resources to minimize duplicated effort in administration.

A highlight of this year's program was a dinner for the lay leaders of each parish and local Anglican organisations. The night included an address by the Archbishop, reports on initiatives in local mission, networking, sharing ideas and praying together. Another highlight was our second annual "Shire to the World" night. Ministers from across the area gathered people to hear a challenge to serve in full time ministry.

The next steps are to network others involved in similar ministries, to consider a jointly funded column in the local paper, and to work with the new "Soul Revival" (ENC) church plant. In October the rectors will meet with a senior Council manager to better understand demographic trends and the implications for local mission of the Council's strategic plan.

I am greatly encouraged by the growing sense of trust and co-operation between not only rectors, but church staff and lay leaders. Much has been achieved, but I still look forward to the prospect of what might happen as our partnership continues to build over the coming years.

*Neil Fitzpatrick*

## Sydney City Mission Area

The City of Sydney is like the Sydney City Mission Area: it is diverse and eclectic. This presents its challenges for Mission, but it also means that there have been some joys. We have slowed up in 2012, but are considering what this Mission Area may do together in 2013. Some things we have done over the past 2 years. There is good will among the rectors, but no obvious paths to joint mission. But we have met and prayed together.

### *Meetings for rectors:*

The Mission Area rectors have gathered in 2010 and 2011 to share their experiences of mission in our respective parishes as rectors and we have prayed. We have done this each time.

### *Demographics and research:*

rectors have come to meetings with a description of their parishes (mostly from experience, as well as some research) and how this has shaped Mission. We discussed 9 characteristics of a typical Sydneysider.

### *Life of Jesus:*

John Dickson came to our Meeting last year to introduce us to the Life of Jesus Course, suggesting ways in which it could be used in parishes to reach the lost. Each Rector was given or sent a copy of the DVD and book.

### *Sally Lloyd Jones Training for Sunday School Teachers:*

The author of the Jesus Story Book Bible came to Sydney in August last year. She ran a seminar for the Kid's Ministry workers and parents of the Sydney City Mission Area. She ran training on how to tell the stories of the gospels in memorable ways and provided encouragement to the teachers.

### *How to reach Urban Areas and Medium Density Housing.*

Jasper Lee ran a presentation on how to reach Medium Density housing with information about following the seams of friendships, how to do mailouts, finding third spaces etc. (See attachment)

### *Care for the hurting, poor, lonely, homeless, sick and dying:*

Important in the Sydney City Mission Area is intentional care and mission to the marginalised. We introduced the simple idea of having an advocate in each church that helps members of the church connect with existing organisations who are doing the work of helping these people. (For example, Anglicare). It is an idea that I saw work well in New York City.

### *Sauerkraut introduction.*

Andrew Katay introduced the rectors to the basic idea of Sauerkraut: that each minister becomes more intentional about what a child of God is meant to be like, and how the church can help a person to grow in Christ. It was a good introduction. Some rectors have joined the course.

*Justin Moffatt*



## **Sydney East Mission Area**

The Sydney East Mission Area covers an area that runs from the harbour in the north to Botany Bay in the south, the Pacific in the East and Southern Cross Drive in the west. Our 18 parishes are seeking to take the good news of Jesus to some of the most densely populated and economically diverse parts of the city.

During the first year the rectors met as a large group and then a number of times in smaller groups as finding a time that worked for all 18 of us was near impossible. During these meetings we prayed for each other, considered a number of issues and made plans for the future.

During 2011 we engaged with Jill Wrathall from Anglicare and Alan Cook from ARV considering how we might partner with those organisations as they seek to reach the lost in our Mission Area. We also engaged with the material that Tim Simms introduced to the Mission Area Leaders looking specifically at the ways in which we can improve the way we welcome and integrate newcomers into our congregations.

It was during the interaction with the Tim Simms material that a number of the group wanted to take things further and better establish a mission footing and fine tune the ministries in the congregations they serve. This led to a group of 7 rectors engaging in the Sauerkraut Rector training course with Andrew Katay and Rob Forsyth in 2012. 3 other rectors who have completed Sauerkraut have met to work with each other on fine tuning their mission for their parishes.

Sauerkraut is an intensely practical year long course that involves a monthly day long meeting before which each rector will have read a set text and prepared a detailed assignment on one area of their mission. The areas examined and developed range from welcoming and integration of newcomers, to evangelism strategy through to how to grow Christians and the infrastructure needed to undergird a parish's ministry.



It is a thoroughly practical and encouraging process. The focus for each rector is their own parish and how they will reach the lost within it, build and mature their members in Christ and then see them equipped to serve others.

Each month the group examine and critique each participants plans and ministry thinking, sharpening each other up. They celebrate their successes, pray about their struggles and get to know each other and each other's ministries really well. There is a growing camaraderie amongst the group as we all see our own weaknesses are shared by our colleagues and that together we are able to spur each other on.

Those engaged in the process are developing the skills they need to take the mission of their parish to a new level of clarity of purpose and discipline in implementation. My expectation is that those who complete Sauerkraut in 2012 will continue to meet in 2013, joining with the other rectors who have completed the course, to continue to hold each other accountable as we seek to implement the plans and strategies we've developed.

We are thankful to the diocese for helping to underwrite the costs of the course in 2012.

*Warwick de Jersey*



## **Upper North Mission Area**

The Upper North Mission Area consists of 21 parishes with 26 Church sites from Berowra to Lindfield.

We represent a great diversity in ministry approaches, yet enjoy a great unity in the central mission of our church – to share Jesus. One of our aims has been to understand our diversity as an area. We have, on average, 4 major meetings each year. These meetings have included discussions with Bruce Hall on multi cultural ministry, strategic ministry discussions with Tim Simms and Effective Ministries under God (EMuG), as well as hearing from organisations such as Anglicare and Year 13. Recently (August 2012) we held a youth leadership discussion seminar with Tim Hawkins, at which 26 youth leaders attended. All of our meetings are based on an effort to better understand the current developments in our society and culture (for example, with NCLS and Census data), and to seek to be more effective in our mission partnerships.

What else do we do?

We impact our communities by simply advertising together at Easter and Christmas,

taking out full page advertisements in two local papers. We discuss helpful everyday things like how we plan and conduct our worship services.

The administration staff from our Mission Area meet together each month to share wisdom and provide support in their important roles. This invitation extends beyond the Anglican Churches.

We share our Mission Area network in order to help encourage mission work such as “Community Collection Sunday” (for Anglicare) involving around 8 churches each year. We encourage special and unique mission projects such as the gospel based musical “Nicodemus”, held earlier in 2012 at Covenant Christian School, which reached thousands of people.

We are now about to embark on a new pilot program of a “ministry board” - a small group of rectors meeting together to develop further partnerships in a mentored setting. Through this, we will seek to build accountability structures and develop strategic training for ministry. This is an important step for us in building deeper relationships and furthering our mission effectiveness.

I have been encouraged over these past years to see our churches struggle together with similar challenges in ministry. I feel privileged that we have been able to get to know each other better and see how much we have in common. But I have also been challenged with what is happening. This is a vast and diverse mission field in the Upper North – financially diverse, culturally diverse, demographically diverse in every way. God is doing some amazing things through His churches here. But I do believe the most amazing will be watching him continuing to develop us, one day at a time, to be a network of missional churches, building each other up, sharing our deep history, and celebrating a unique victory in the lives of the people in our community. All of this work is to one end – that we may see more people saved and grow in Christ, through the mission of His church, and to the glory of God.

*Bruce Stanley*



## **Warringah Mission Area**

The Warringah Mission Area covers what is commonly known locally as “The Northern Beaches” stretching from Manly in the South, Palm Beach in the north, and Belrose in the west. There is a local paper, the Manly Daily, which covers this area, and the geography and other local factors give those living in the area a sense of local identity or belonging. It’s population is predominantly white Anglo-saxon overall, and the

"Beaches lifestyle" describes a largely fun-loving, hedonistic culture, where one of the major activities for children is "Nippers", the junior surf lifesaving program on each beach. Evangelical churches impact only a minority of the population.

The Mission Area activities so far have included regular meetings of Senior Ministers, including a couple of Baptist ministers, and a number of activities and events coming out of these planning and prayer times. These include sessions looking at the "Effective Ministry Under God" material, and following up some of the recommendations in these conferences and booklets. We have recently had a session with Colin Marshall on "Creating Disciple-making teams" with about 20 ministry staff attending. Our plan is to follow this up next year with some coaching by Colin with a number of parishes, to help train ministry staff and lay leaders in this area.

There is a healthy network of Youth Groups in our area, who meet regularly for planning, combined training, and outreach events. Recently there was an Area training meeting with about 50 youth minister and lay leaders in attendance, and also a combined Area Youth Event with about 300 attending.

We are continuing with efforts to move one of our churches (Beacon Hill) into "mission mode". Beacon Hill church now has a new younger minister in charge, and we are seeking to re-establish a "Families Ministry" at this church, to provide a base for effective outreach into the local area. (which has many young families). One cluster of churches is sharing regular training programs for members (including evangelism training, PTC courses etc), and there was a Combined Training day for Women in July, when about 100 women gathered. There is also an Annual "Summer Holiday Mission Week" that is a co-operative effort, with a number of churches actively involved.

Another initiative that is being developed is a Local "Men's Convention" organised by the Narrabeen Baptist Church Men, but as a regional event. (their Senior pastor is a part of our Area group of Ministers). This annual event includes training and Evangelistic meetings for men, in May each year. I expect more churches will get involved over time.

I have been encouraged by the way each church is seeking to reach out, and impact its local area for Christ. As we share Christmas and Easter advertising in the local paper, and combine with outreach events at various times, I do think the local community recognizes that we share a common faith in Christ. And I think the programs we have begun to train lay members of our congregations in a number of our churches will bear fruit in the long term.

*Kerry Nagel*

**(Note:** The Wollongong Mission Area reflection was not able to be included in time for printing.)

