

**RECORD OF GROUP CONVERSATIONS**  
**Myall Deanery Gathering held Saturday 12 March 2011**

**MYALL DEANERY GATHERING CONVERSATIONS**  
**(GROUP A)**

<b>Conversation/ Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lay Leadership in the Structure</li> <li>▪ Formation and Training of Laity and Clergy in New Leadership Structures</li> <li>▪ The Role of Ordained Ministry Where There Will Be Far Fewer Priests/Deacons</li> </ul>
<b>Deanery</b>	<b>MYALL</b> Gathering held Saturday 12 March 2011 – St Stephen’s Hall, Witt Street, Tea gardens
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Greg Byrne; Fr Kevin Corrigan; Rhonda Bobako
<b>Scribe</b>	Fr Derek Garner
<b>Other Members</b>	<b>Group A</b> (members names not recorded)
<p><b>Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greg Byrne tabled a model (5 pillars model of each Parish team. Sheets of diagrams of suggested models;</li> <li>▪ Two deaneries – one Northern and one Port Stephens. Two regions become two deaneries;</li> <li>▪ Structures set up in Bulahdelah Parish already with Parish Pastoral Council;</li> <li>▪ Josephites have done training courses for parish leadership and these leaders (with justice) should be paid for their work;</li> <li>▪ TWEC as leadership trainers;</li> <li>▪ Technical skills needed, and also good “job descriptions” approved by the Diocese;</li> <li>▪ Alignment of schools with deaneries (clusters, groups, etc);</li> <li>▪ Parish/school and Local Government made corresponding;</li> <li>▪ Risk of diminishment of place of clergy – need to express a shepherding role for pastors;</li> <li>▪ Priests who do not have organisational skills required by good leaders need retraining;</li> <li>▪ Call them parishes, not “mega” or “super” parishes;</li> <li>▪ Place of deacons in the diocese/parish roles;</li> <li>▪ An enriched theological reflection of the role of ministry (priests and deacons);</li> <li>▪ Clarifying of moderator role of priesthood;</li> <li>▪ Stability of people compared with priests, who move about;</li> <li>▪ Ministry of lay people but without official titles;</li> <li>▪ Pauline model of awareness of gifts of the Spirit (cf: Corinthians);</li> <li>▪ Issue of what model of lay leadership is desired;</li> <li>▪ Moderating role of priest in deanery;</li> <li>▪ Issue of co-responsibility (priests and people);</li> <li>▪ Financial diminishment to be able to pay roles.</li> <li>▪ Assets not being used in Diocese sold and used to finance;</li> <li>▪ Canon Law of Deaneries and Parishes already in place;</li> <li>▪ Parish leadership team – moderator replaces Parish Priest. Overseer role (like Bishop);</li> <li>▪ Regional structures that could work – do we need deaneries? Church law allows working regions;</li> </ul>	

- Shortage of priests – choices of parishes of leaders;
- Issue of amalgamated parishes (Mass centres in the one parish), another model is workable;
- Expression of “hostility” against priests in some documents;
- Diminishment of numbers of lay people as Church (not just shortage of priests);
- Sense of trust in co-responsibility, co-ownership and cooperative ministry;
- Acknowledge fact that lay people cannot practically run parishes as an after-work responsibility;
- Issue of “value” of outreach programs to attract and support new parishioners;
- **What do we Want?** (Look at Bulahdelah parish model!);
- Being Church to people – evangelising by lay-leaders in the local communities.

**Action/Strategies:**

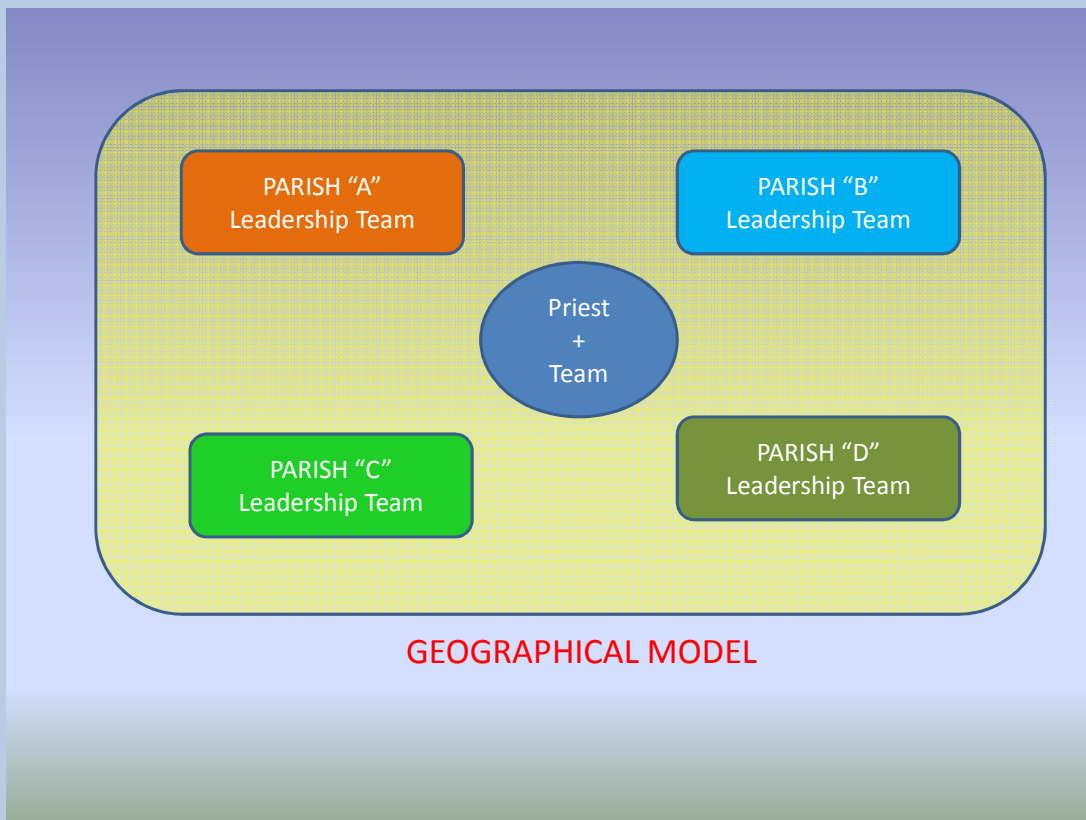
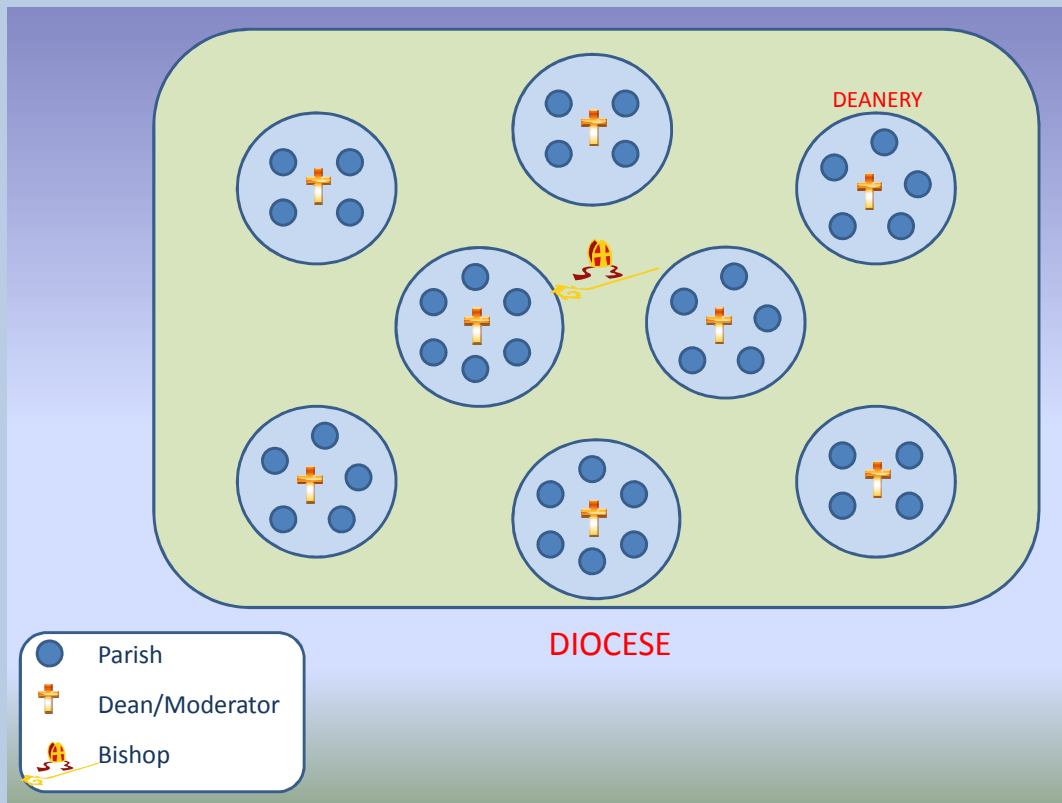
- Model favoured is model put forward by Greg Byrne on labelled sheets – Moderator Model of Leadership #4

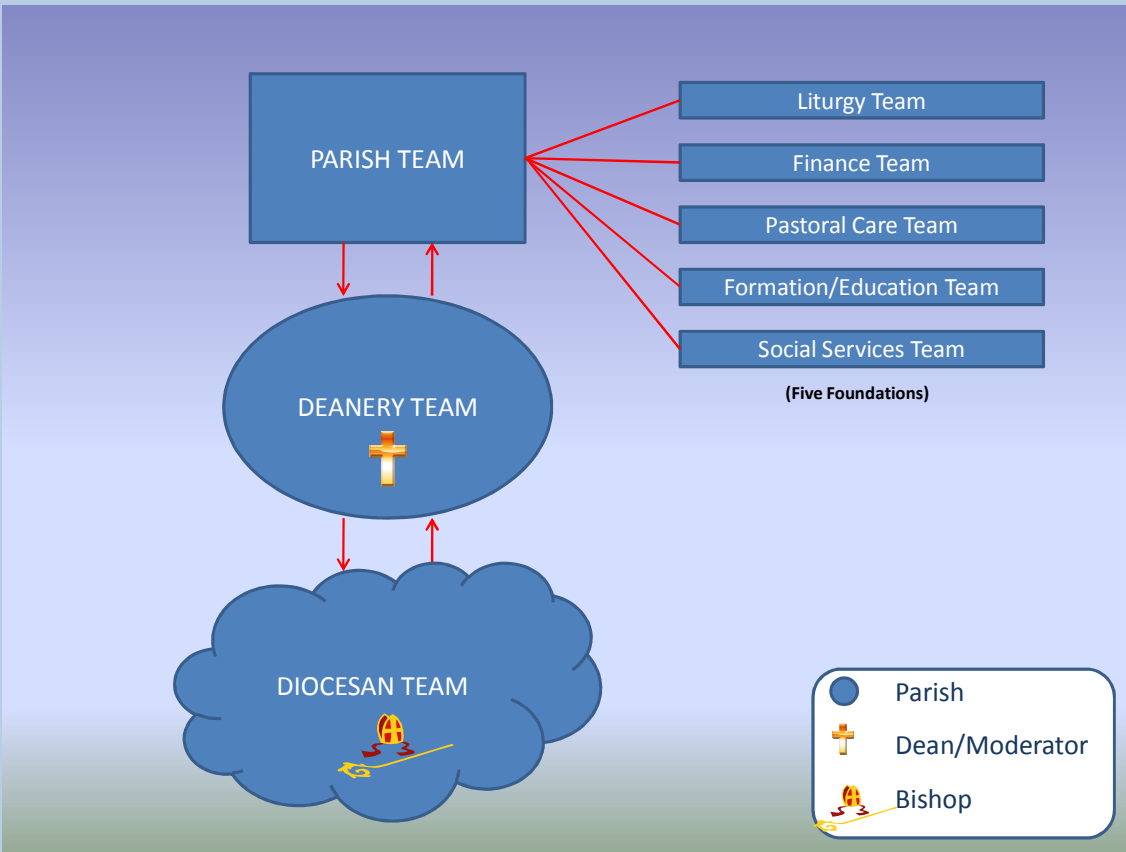
**Recommendations:**

- None recorded.

**SUMMARY:-**

- Regions could become deaneries;
- They are working;
- Trained laity not being used;
- Good job descriptions (common across Diocese) to be developed;
- Local Government areas?;
- Shepherding role for pastors;
- Priests may need retraining or opt out;
- Role of deacons – parish/diocese;
- All ministry to be reassessed;
- Lay people stay, priests come and go;
- Awareness of multiplicity of gifts (Pauline);
- Moderator role (influence or interference? );
- Just pay;
- Can assets be sold to finance pastoral ministry?;
- Moderator is ‘overseer’ – not on top of everything;
- Who chooses leaders? Lay/priests?;
- Currently a variety of models;
- Shortage also extends to lay people;
- Need trust;
- Lay people can’t run outside of work times;
- Outreach;
- What do we want? – To be Church/evangelical;
- **Suggest Moderator Model (#4). Greg Byrne’s model could work (diagram attached)**





## MYALL DEANERY GATHERING CONVERSATIONS (GROUP B)

<b>Conversation/ Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pastoral Focus Versus Structural Needs</li> <li>▪ Do we Need a “Change of Heart” to Become Co-Responsible?</li> </ul>								
<b>Deanery</b>	<b>MYALL</b> Gathering held Saturday 12 March 2011 – St Stephen’s Hall, Witt Street, Tea gardens								
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Lance Scriven; Ree O’Brien								
<b>Scribe</b>	Lance Scriven								
<b>Other Members</b>	<p><b>Group B</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Annette Morrow</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Owen Carroll</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Veronica Hobson</td> <td>Helen Scriven</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tracey Edstein</td> <td>Marie Edstein</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sheila Carey</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Annette Morrow	Owen Carroll	Veronica Hobson	Helen Scriven	Tracey Edstein	Marie Edstein	Sheila Carey	
Annette Morrow	Owen Carroll								
Veronica Hobson	Helen Scriven								
Tracey Edstein	Marie Edstein								
Sheila Carey									
<b>Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lay trained, but not being utilised;</li> <li>▪ Proposed models do not build community – pulls apart;</li> <li>▪ How many meetings <b><i>must</i></b> priests attend (versus claims of “too many meetings?”);</li> <li>▪ First collection – why raise “viable” when Central Fund already spreads the load;</li> <li>▪ What happens to second collection under the proposed models? Will this be shared also?;</li> <li>▪ What office structure will there be? What happens to the “good” ones already employed?;</li> <li>▪ Business structure consuming so much effort;</li> <li>▪ Co-responsible capabilities of retirement age parishioners;</li> <li>▪ “Change of heart” – for priests as well as laity;</li> <li>▪ Consistency by “the now man” to support the community;</li> <li>▪ Allow people to use their gifts;</li> <li>▪ Free up priestly time for pastoral activities and enable them to follow their pastoral vocation rather than business;</li> <li>▪ Regions have served their purpose and provided means of communication and formation. They brought us to where we are now;</li> <li>▪ Modern demographics (double income, full day committed) creates challenges to lay leadership during normal working week;</li> <li>▪ Age demographic of the laity needs to also be considered. They too are getting old;</li> <li>▪ Many people are attending through loyalty – have little other motivation;</li> <li>▪ Great diversity in participation levels observed – from “vibrant and enthusiastic” to “flat”;</li> <li>▪ The five letter word we need is “faith” not “money”;</li> <li>▪ People want <i>community</i> as focus.</li> </ul>									
<b>Action/Strategies:</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify/respond to our needs;</li> <li>▪ New structure must enable pastoral activity in preference to financial balance;</li> </ul>									

- Money will not solve the problems.

**Recommendations:**

- Structure that enables pastoral activity in balance with finance;
- Outcome that accepts a “change of heart” to enable the laity to participate more fully.

**SUMMARY:-**

- Office structures – can use existing;
- Business structure is draining;
- Change of heart – gain trust of clergy;
- Allow priests to be pastoral, not business;
- Regions have served their purpose;
- Ageing structure;
- Five-letter word – faith, not money;
- Allow laity to function;
- Co-responsibility is 24/7

## MYALL DEANERY GATHERING CONVERSATIONS (GROUP C)

<b>Conversation/ Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Leadership Structure to Support Youth and Families</li> <li>▪ Parish and Primary/Secondary Schools</li> </ul>										
<b>Deanery</b>	<b>MYALL</b> Gathering held Saturday 12 March 2011 – St Stephen’s Hall, Witt Street, Tea gardens										
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Denise Ryan										
<b>Scribe</b>	Loretta Heffernan										
<b>Other Members</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Group C</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Sharon Fowle</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Monica Fitzmaurice</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fr John Kedari</td> <td>Rose Smith</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bernadette Daczko</td> <td>Gabrielle Archer</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Ariadhne Laboure</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Group C</b>		Sharon Fowle	Monica Fitzmaurice	Fr John Kedari	Rose Smith	Bernadette Daczko	Gabrielle Archer		Ariadhne Laboure
<b>Group C</b>											
Sharon Fowle	Monica Fitzmaurice										
Fr John Kedari	Rose Smith										
Bernadette Daczko	Gabrielle Archer										
	Ariadhne Laboure										
<b>Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:</b>											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools meet people where “they are at”. Young people are spiritual (Catholic) even if they are not connected to “Church Building”;</li> <li>▪ Youth and families – recognition of ministry/mission of existing schools (both Catholic and State) as a vitally important role for outreach of our Church. Needs improvements to existing resourcing – specialist human and financial and leadership roles created, e.g. Youth Ministers/Workers;</li> <li>▪ Try to attract families/young people socially to events run by parishes;</li> <li>▪ Encourage “buddy” system of parishioners to support sacramental families;</li> <li>▪ Could create connections with CatholicCare, Youth Services and Family Services at a parish level/involvement, support and participation;</li> <li>▪ Tea Garden’s have begun to have “Yummy Mummy’s” morning teas for mums and their children. This started with two – now over 20, in a short period of time – Outreach;</li> <li>▪ Sacramental program is a good way to engage families and children;</li> <li>▪ Increase communication between parish and schools about events for families and young people.</li> <li>▪ Recognise that School RE’s, Chaplains, SRE are encouraging students and their families to feel to be part of parishes. After all, schools are physically, emotionally and spiritually part of the parish community and children should not be judged by church attendance as to being Catholic</li> </ul>											
<b>Action/Strategies:</b>											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on ways to encourage more connections with parish and schools;</li> <li>▪ Youth leaders to assist with families and young people to engage with life of parish community.</li> </ul>											
<b>Recommendations:</b>											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Address relationship between local church and schools (not just Catholic schools). Schools are wanting a relationship;</li> </ul>											

- Employ a Youth Leader at local levels. Resource this person. Support structures needed;
- Invite CatholicCare to assist with youth initiatives in local parishes;
- Develop and resource parish and school links;
- School personnel to be encouraged to understand the potential of building links to parishes;
- Priests could visit students/SRE classes in public schools;
- Could parishes support Chaplaincy program – CSO to supplement resourcing for Catholic chaplains;
- Better communication channels to be developed between parishes and schools. Church bulletins, school newsletters, local papers, word of mouth, invitation, e-mail – let each know about events;
- Better resource chaplains in schools;
- Offer suggestions on how parishes can implement different strategies to encourage families (could share what is happening in active parishes as an example).

**SUMMARY:-**

- Relationship required between all schools and parishes;
- Youth leaders at local level – available to all, but Catholic based;
- CatholicCare in parishes;
- School-parish links;
- School personnel to work with parishes;
- Priests to visit all schools;
- Chaplaincy;
- Communication channels.

## MYALL DEANERY GATHERING CONVERSATIONS (GROUP D)

<b>Conversation/ Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the Model of the Myall Deanery to Stay the Same?</li> <li>▪ Do we Need a New Model of Councils, Teams and Regional Councils?</li> </ul>				
<b>Deanery</b>	<b>MYALL</b> Gathering held Saturday 12 March 2011 – St Stephen’s Hall, Witt Street, Tea gardens				
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Helen Green				
<b>Scribe</b>	Helen Green				
<b>Other Members</b>	<p><b>Group D</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Deacon Vince Ryan (Northern)</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Mike Stace (Bulahdelah)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tony Burgin (Nelson B</td> <td>Susanne Burgin (Nelson Bay)</td> </tr> </table>	Deacon Vince Ryan (Northern)	Mike Stace (Bulahdelah)	Tony Burgin (Nelson B	Susanne Burgin (Nelson Bay)
Deacon Vince Ryan (Northern)	Mike Stace (Bulahdelah)				
Tony Burgin (Nelson B	Susanne Burgin (Nelson Bay)				
<b>Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deaneries do not have relevance to the laity (Tony Burgin feels);</li> <li>▪ Port Stephens, Nelson Bay, Mallabula to go to City Region (firm comment);</li> <li>▪ Geographically should Karuah and Tea Gardens be part of the Chisholm Region?</li> <li>▪ Manning (Northern) Region and Bulahdelah to stay together;</li> <li>▪ Deanery needs a Pastoral Officer based around parish offices “PAID”, not Administrative Support Officer, as proposed “PASTORAL”;</li> <li>▪ The Deanery model would rely heavily on having a Pastoral Officer for it to succeed.</li> <li>▪ No Regional Councils - go to Deanery Councils;</li> <li>▪ So that parishes form Pastoral Leadership Teams with Deanery Pastoral Support Officer.</li> </ul>					
<b>Action/Strategies:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None recorded.</li> </ul>					
<b>Recommendations:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Northern Deanery No 6 Manning Region – including Bulahdelah, excluding Karuah and Tea Gardens;</li> <li>▪ Karuah and Tea Gardens go to Raymond Terrace (Chisholm Region)</li> </ul>					
<b>SUMMARY:-</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distance – restructure for Karuah/Tea Gardens/Raymond Terrace; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ difficult to attend meetings;</li> <li>➢ needs to be practical;</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Needs paid pastoral model for each of parishes services;</li> <li>▪ Deanery Councils, not Regional Councils;</li> <li>▪ Parish Pastoral Leadership Teams – “Councils/teams” to go;</li> <li>▪ Deanery model given lay Administration Officer/Finance Officer (same person)</li> </ul>					

## MYALL DEANERY GATHERING CONVERSATIONS (GROUP E)

<b>Conversation/ Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vocation of Marriage/Family and Pressure Felt to Take on More Church Roles</li> <li>▪ Volunteers in Structures – Time Pressures</li> </ul>						
<b>Deanery</b>	<b>MYALL</b> Gathering held Saturday 12 March 2011 – St Stephen’s Hall, Witt Street, Tea gardens						
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Gemma Stace						
<b>Scribe</b>	Gemma Stace						
<b>Other Members</b>	<p><b>Group E</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Kris Koch</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Tony Knight (Forster/Tuncurry)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Noel Finch (Nelson Bay)</td> <td>Phil Harvey (Bulahdelah)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marg Pile (Bulahdelah)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Kris Koch	Tony Knight (Forster/Tuncurry)	Noel Finch (Nelson Bay)	Phil Harvey (Bulahdelah)	Marg Pile (Bulahdelah)	
Kris Koch	Tony Knight (Forster/Tuncurry)						
Noel Finch (Nelson Bay)	Phil Harvey (Bulahdelah)						
Marg Pile (Bulahdelah)							
<p><b>Discussion Notes, Key Understanding, Outstanding Questions, Observations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Obligation or doing best you can – which one?</li> <li>▪ Less number of people willing to help and/or available to help;</li> <li>▪ Rules keep changing on what correct procedures are, making people reluctant, e.g. Eucharistic Ministers;</li> <li>▪ Things like Eucharistic Ministers – older people possibly not comfortable and stop going to Mass. Again, less people share jobs;</li> <li>▪ Pressure – more groups within Church structure needing people to help;</li> <li>▪ Deanery – will people be employed and paid to take responsibility for leadership in groups, e.g. youth groups, marriage and family groups? Need continuity of person to have ownership of role;</li> <li>▪ Roster for everything – self pressure to help with everything – becomes a chore;</li> <li>▪ Want involvement but if you need to step back you feel you can’t without letting someone down;</li> <li>▪ Cost of living pressures mean many people work full-time – also expectation to help in Church roles;</li> <li>▪ Families falling apart – already have time pressures;</li> <li>▪ Possibly more difficult in smaller church communities to get numbers of people to help;</li> <li>▪ Feel guilty when not helping or not involved;</li> <li>▪ <b>JOBS:-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Eucharistic ministries, lay people for Sunday Celebration in Anticipation of Eucharist;</li> <li>➢ Finance Committee/Fundraising Committee;</li> <li>➢ Parish Council/Pastoral Council/Community Meetings;</li> <li>➢ Reading at Mass;</li> <li>➢ Church cleaning/flowers;</li> <li>➢ Baptismal preparation;</li> <li>➢ Confirmation preparation;</li> <li>➢ Preparing church for Mass;</li> <li>➢ Musicians/musical liturgy;</li> <li>➢ Funerals;</li> <li>➢ Bulletin;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>							

- Working bees – maintenance;
- Washing vestments, altar cloths, altar server robes.

**Action/Strategies:**

- At least a part-time paid person to coordinate and oversee each job, so that volunteers do not feel the total weight of responsibility;
- Do we have to come to an era of priests being able to marry, married men/women being able to be ordained?
- Clearly defined job descriptions when asking for volunteers. Clear statement of what is involved and the amount of time involved;
- Encourage volunteers to know that they can say when they would like to step back for a while (but then who is there to step in?)

**Recommendations:**

- School Masses in school time – are parents/children being trained that they are part of school community only, instead of Church community? Are these school masses letting parents/children/families feel their weekend Mass obligation is fulfilled and could this be the reason for absences from weekend Mass?
- If there was a change of attitude that school/church are one body and these families start coming to weekend Masses, we then have an immediate increase of people to support what needs to be done and to share the load.

**SUMMARY:-**

- Obligations;
- Rules;
- Employed for groups;
- Continuity;
- Pressure;
- Volunteers able to stand back;
- School masses distinguish schools from parishes;
- Ordination of married people.

## **Recommendations from the Myall Deanery Gathering**

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

**Held at Tea Gardens**

After feedback from the five Open Conversations the following recommendations were put forward at this Deanery Gathering.

- A. That the six deanery model developed by the Maitland Clergy Central Fund – “Proposal for Deanery Structure” - undergoes some fine tuning and be adopted.
- B. That individual parish groups and the Diocesan Pastoral Council etc. Be invited to put forward pastorally focused models for the structure of the diocese.
- C. Accept one of the three proposals contained in the “Proposal for Parish Leadership” (Re. 517.1 and 517.2) document contained in the Deanery Gathering Information Pack.
- D. Revisit the Synod structure of Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Pastoral Teams and replace them with a Parish Leadership Team.
- E. Include Youth and Family Parish Support in whatever structures are formed.
- F. Develop a Moderator Model based on 10 Regions/Deaneries using leadership team models with local flexibility and inter-parish collaboration.
- G. Provide training support and financial support for lay leadership.

Those gathered were then ask to weight each of these recommendations using the scale 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4. These weightings were then collated to ascertain the most favoured recommendations from this Gathering.

## MYALL DEANERY GATHERING RECOMMENDATIONS – 12 MARCH 2011

