

Session Three – Moving Forward Together
REGIONAL MEETINGS
Diocesan Gathering 2010

What is our Vision for the Region?

Region:	UPPER HUNTER	
Facilitator & Participants		
PAST	PRESENT	
Where have we Been?	Where are we Now?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Australia – small town community advantages, but have also suffered from isolation; ▪ Originally all parishes had their own priests. Now they have shared priests; ▪ Priest-centred country parishes, where there was a Catholic culture which produced a lot of priests and religious vocations. That culture was a part of the people’s lives; ▪ Sunday was a day of REST; ▪ Country shows were the social glue bonding the communities; ▪ Historically, towns had their own identities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing priests among the parishes in the Upper Hunter; ▪ Feel familiar – not an outsider in all the Mass centres; ▪ Youth of today all work at Macdonald’s. We are up against society and work – most family members do shift work (e.g. in the mines) which impacts on Mass attendances; ▪ Different structures in the different communities of the Upper Hunter – youth moves away so that priests do not know the family structures; ▪ A challenge that we have is that strangers may not be recognised initially; ▪ Upper Hunter has a strong feeling of community, but not of Church. In Denman, for example, there is no time for Church meetings as people are heavily involved in Community meetings; ▪ It is difficult to arrange a Lenten program as parishioners have so many commitments elsewhere and have other things to accommodate. We needs to emphasise that certain times – e.g. Christmas and Lent – need to take priority with regard to church/sacramental functions – and to do this in a non-guilt manner. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mary MacKillop Liturgy demonstrated that we have examples of sharing the talents and resources of the Upper Hunter (viz a viz Sr Brigid and Sr Maria) ▪ Not much happens outside of Church that is Upper Hunter wide, and the Church functions as “Upper Hunter”. It is better to organise church functions as a region, rather than separate parishes. ▪ We let our parishes know what is happening in our other parishes of the region. We need to continue to do this and we need to do it well – hope for the future.
FUTURE	
What are our Hopes for the Future? Where Would we Like to Be?	How Are We Going to Get There?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To continue to work as a region; ▪ To have separate meeting rooms – church office apart from the presbytery (works well in Denman, Merriwa and Scone); ▪ E-conferences need to continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need - to use and share our talents to build our communities of Catholics ▪ Action – cooperate across the region on doing a few key things really well ▪ Support Required – support the Upper Hunter Region to continue to meet and function. Give the right to meet as a region apart from a deanery – to meet as an Upper Hunter identifiable region with help and education and shared vision to continue to do the things we do now.