

Upper Hunter Pastoral Region

Merriwa, Denman, Muswellbrook, Scone and Murrurundi Parishes

Regional Assembly Report - Issues Raised

Preamble

This is your *Regional Report*, promised by Bishop Michael Malone at your Regional Assembly. We hope it is of assistance to you as you continue to engage in the process of addressing the regional issues raised at your Assembly.

Just a reminder that the round of Regional Assemblies sought to achieve the following:

1. To provide an opportunity which invited the participation of a wider cross section of people, particularly of young adults;
2. To engage people with stimulus material that would help them develop their understanding of:
 - the influences which have shaped the Church as we experience it today
 - the culture in which we live
 - the type of Church we are called to be
 - what it means to be involved in the evangelising mission of Jesus and his Church in the 21st century;
 - what is needed to be effective followers of Jesus in today's culture.
3. To provide an opportunity for participants to discuss key issues in the light of this stimulus material.

The following questions, which emerge from Fr. Richard's presentation, are offered to help you continue to explore these issues in the light of his input.

1. What is the heart or essence of this issue?
2. What about this issue is Good News or has the potential to bring Good News?
3. What about this issue contains obstacles or blocks to the Good News, both for the faith community and the society beyond it?
4. Where or how in this issue, is the Spirit calling you into the Paschal Mystery; into the journey from death to new life?
5. What resources do you have to help you respond to this issue in a way that takes you forward into a fuller living of the life of Christ?
6. Amongst the options you are considering as your response to this issue, what would you consider to be -
 - healthy or unhealthy responses (does it blame; does it deny the existing reality)?
 - responses focused on mission or survival?
 - responses emerging from a catholic (both/and) mindset as opposed to an either/or mindset?
 - responses that will take your community of faith forward?
7. Where and how does your response fit with the 15 principles and tasks outlined in Fr. Richard's sheet 'Shaping the Church's Future'?
8. Will your response spark and energise people's life, passion, commitment and hope?

With every Best Wish,
The Diocesan Assembly Standing Committee.

Regional Issues	Shared Issues (Region and Diocese)	Diocesan Issues	Universal Church Issues
<p>1. The Upper Hunter Pastoral Region. Dimensions of this included -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion that organisational structures for the Region include such things as an office, secretary, intra-net, shared newsletters, resources, activities etc. • Regional Pastoral Planning be undertaken to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear and achievable short and long term goals - A flexible plan for the way forward - Discernment of God’s purposes - More support for groups - Openness to fresh approaches. - A PR dimension <p>Some comments which may help your reflection ... Diocesan Pastoral Planning could be of support and assistance as considered appropriate by the region. Contact Paul O’Bryan on 49791151</p>			
<p>2. Regional Assemblies such as this are of great value in building community, spirit, hope and life across the Region. Essential elements of such gatherings identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good input • Enthusiasm and contribution of participants. • Faith sharing. • Such gatherings promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciation and acceptance of difference - Hope - Openness to new ideas 			
<p>3. The Community is more open to change Characteristics of this included -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed understanding of the need for change • Openness to being challenged by that need • Acknowledgement of distress caused • Readiness for personal change • Role of discernment critical 			

4. We are deepening our understanding of what it means to be Church today.

Dimensions of this issue included -

- Greater understanding of everyone's need to participate, to be actively involved, to take on responsibility for the life and mission of the Church.
- Need for people to experience the love of God in the community
- Openness to people's gifts and the sharing of them

5. We are opening up our focus on community.

- To be more inclusive and outreaching.
- NCC/ SCG movement

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

Diocesan Support continues to be available for the ongoing development of NCC/ SCG through the work of Paul O'Bryan (49791151)

6. We have and want more vibrant liturgy.

Dimensions of this issue included -

- Continued promotion of involvement
- Formation for liturgical ministry
- When Mass is not available ...

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- Diocesan Support will be available for negotiating the implementation of *Sunday Celebrations in Anticipation of Eucharist* as appropriate to Regional needs.
- See Faith Development point below for other resources which may be able to respond to your particular needs.

7. Importance and value of Spirituality.

Dimensions of this issue included -

- The need to nourish and support people's personal faith
- Our need to live reflective, discerning lives
- Our desire to live as a reflection of God's love for us and all.

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

See point below on Faith Development

8. Faith Development

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

While this is a local issue, there are multiple resources available throughout the Diocese to support the region in responding to it.

- TWEC – contact Sr. Colleen Carney on 49307431
- Beginning Theology programme – contact Christine Cavenagh on 49791186
- Faith Development Commission can be contacted through Dianne Lantry – Commissions Support Officer on 49791156

9. Ecumenism.

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- The Diocesan Ecumenical Commission may be of some support to you. Contact can be made through Dianne Lantry - Commissions Support Officer on 49791156

10. Involvement and support of young people in the Church community.

Dimension of this issue named included -

- The need for the community to understand young people their culture and needs;
- School parish links
- Focusing on positives of young people;
- Role of parents in this
- More religion in State Schools

Some comments which may help your reflection ...

- The diocese has already placed considerable focus on this issue culminating in the report Vitalink. Referring to it may be of assistance.
- Paul Toohey is employed by the diocese in the Pastoral Planning area of Young Adult Ministry. He can be contacted on 49791153
- In this diocese religion in State Schools is known as SRE (Special Religious Education). Mary Smith is the co-ordinator. 49671098. Also the time available for SRE in State Schools is specified by the Department of Education. The work of SRE in any region is dependent on parishioners willingness to do this ministry.

11. Outreach.

- In our district, nation, world.
- Social justice issues e.g. refugees, armaments, environment