

# Lay Leadership Development Report

Synod, July 2019

The past eighteen months have been a time of change for Lay Leadership in the Synod.

Rohan Prior moved to take up a position in Tasmania; Mel Perkins moved from Queensland to take up the position of Lay Leadership Development Coordinator with eLM beginning June 2018. The commitment of both Rohan and Mel to working collaboratively and collaborative leadership development is something that is ongoing from one to another.

Following the major strategic review and the development of the eLM Unit, we have been looking again at how best to serve the Synod in Lay Leadership training and formation.

There have been renewed calls for

- online depthed training/education for Lay Preachers (initial and continuing education), worship leaders and others;
- renewed mentor training for the Period of Discernment (and others) that is more culturally appropriate and spiritually deepening;
- more clarity around competencies for Lay Preacher and Pastor training; and
- continued calls and questions for how we as a church meet the current and future needs for leadership in areas where ordained leadership is thin on the ground.

In years past, Rohan Prior had been part of a small but intentional group of educators from the Synods of Qld, NSW/ACT and VicTas who sought to bring about a renewed common curriculum for Lay Preacher education, based on the Lay Preacher competencies (that was also appropriate for others who wished to deepen their spiritual, theological and biblical knowledge). The Qld educators, including Mel Perkins, translated this curriculum into five online courses. These courses are now available for development in VicTas. Mel is preparing these for use on the Assembly's Uniting Learning online platform. The Worship and Preaching Course will be split into two and released at Synod this year, with four biblical and theological courses to follow by the end of the year. These courses will initially be non-accredited (though comparable Cert IV/Diploma level requirements).

Period of Discernment Mentor training is being reviewed to encompass other forms of mentors needed in the church – including Lay Preachers, and Pastors. Ongoing work is being undertaken to develop training that develops deeper intercultural awareness and spiritual awareness.

As Mel has travelled around both states undertaking training and visiting, she has been listening and asking questions. The bigger questions of meeting leadership needs are complex and involve many facets and parts of the church – how we meet today's needs are going to be different to those in 5 and 10 years time – and we still need to meet those of today.

This all continues to be a work in progress – collaboratively working with other eLM staff, Presbyteries and referring back to the MSR.

*Mel Perkins – Lay Leadership Development Coordinator, April, 2019*