



Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Presbytery of North East Victoria

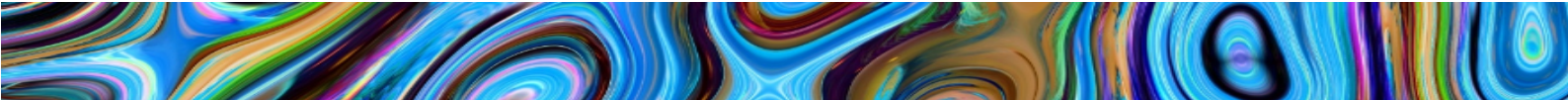
Placement Profile

Mission Development (South)

Presbytery	North East Victoria
Time Fraction	FTE placement
Term	5 years with the potential for extension after a project review at 5 years
Suitable for	Minister of the Word, Deacon, Pastor
Terms and Conditions	Refer To Terms of Placement
Approval Date	

The Primary Purpose of the Placement

The circumstance of the church and the role of the presbytery is rapidly changing. To be best equipped to meet the challenges we face, the Presbytery of North East Victoria, is developing a strong team ministry. As part of that team ministry the Presbytery is looking for a Mission Development worker whose major focus will be in the South of the Presbytery supporting and equipping congregations and individuals for mission and outreach.



The Presbytery

The purpose and role of the Presbytery is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except for those agencies which are directly responsible to the Synod or Assembly. It will, in particular, exercise oversight over congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another's faith and bear one another's burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Jesus Christ. It will promote those wider aspects of the work of the Church committed to it by the Synod or the Assembly. (Basis of Union Para15, 1992 edition) *(See also Appendix 2)*

Role Purpose

The Presbytery of North East Victoria is responding to the needs of congregations within its bounds to reimagine life together under the strategic headings: **Small, Lay led, Connected and Relational**. These are words that both represent the reality of congregations in the Presbytery and unexpectedly they also represent strengths. We have developed a focus on small groups, strengthened lay leadership; a connection to one another, including through the use of technology, that makes each small group stronger - all of this is tied together by a relational theology. In a time of disruption, such as the one we are currently experiencing, presbytery based ministry agents fulfill a vital role in maintaining connection between congregations, faith communities and the Presbytery and in upholding the ethos of the Uniting Church.

To this end the Presbytery is seeking to create a position with a focus on Mission Development for the south of the Presbytery working across the towns of Yea, Strath Creek, Mansfield, Broadford, Seymour, Avenel, Nagambie, and Euroa. (It should be noted there is no existing congregation at Yea. There is however potential for co-operation with Uniting which has a kindergarten/Long Day Care Centre in the town.) This ministry role will be part of a wider team currently consisting of the Presbytery executive, two generalist Presbytery Ministers, a person providing limited IT support via a web page and directory/mail out support, and a part time events co-ordinator. The Presbytery believes this team approach creates an exciting and attractive placement in a supported and supportive environment.

The Mission Development Worker (South), will, in consultation with the Presbytery team, help the nominated congregations to explore a more missional orientation and at the same time will be seeking to develop small teams of people with a view to establishing new micro expressions of church in the southern region. It is envisaged that Seymour will act as a training, equipping and sending hub for the region. The Mission Development Worker, as part of the Presbytery team, would be engaged in the development and operation of this hub. As part of our searching for the way that ministry and mission can be exercised in the 21st century, this person will help the Presbytery explore and develop the role of IT in reaching out, connecting and supporting congregations. (It should be noted that for this purpose, this placement will be supported with funds from the Hybrid Church BF 19551 grant.) Other tasks would be at the request of the Standing Committee e.g. attending to particular pastoral matters or being part of a Synod group. It is expected that the mission development worker will live in the south of the Presbytery.

Gifts and Graces

The Presbytery is looking for a person who:

- has a well-rounded, firmly-established spiritual life;
- is a creative, innovative, enthusiastic and committed follower of Jesus;

- Is committed to the rural context and has the capacity to reflect theologically in ways that rural people will understand;
- Has the ability, patience and capacity to help congregations negotiate change - through things like coaching, mentoring, and companionship and is willing to develop these skills in others;
- relates well to people across cultures, theological positions and generations;
- has experience in electronic communication including video conferencing (e.g. Zoom);
- has the capacity to resource congregations for worship, leadership and mission including the development of new communities of faith;
- has the ability to work with good boundaries.

Having said this, the Presbytery is ready and willing to explore with ministry agents their particular gifts and graces and is open to what they may bring to the leadership team believing that in this God's people will be best served.

Qualifications and Experience

- Membership of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- An understanding of and commitment to work within the faith and polity of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- Theological, educational and/or missional leadership qualifications and the capacity to support the diversity of faith expressed in the Uniting Church.
- Familiarity with the Councils and Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- A Working with Children/Vulnerable People Check.
- Familiarity with and willingness to adhere to requirements of the Uniting Church in Australia relevant Code of Conduct for ministers and to attend Ethical Ministry refresher training sessions.
- Current Victorian driver's licence
- Ability and willingness to engage in meetings outside normal working hours.

Meetings

The Presbytery currently meets three times a year. Standing Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee and Property and Administration committees meet monthly, and the Mission and Education Committee meets bi-monthly. It is the aim of the Standing Committee to keep time spent in meetings by ministry agents at a minimum. The position, however, does require attendance at:

- a one hour approx. online staff meeting on Monday@4,
- Attending Standing Committee meetings and reporting formally once a quarter (or at other times at the discretion of the worker in consultation with the Presbytery team leader.)

Accountability

In the first instance, the Mission Development worker will work to the team leader (currently the Presbytery Chairperson) and have responsibility to the Standing Committee.

Presbytery of North East Victoria Strategic Direction

MISSION STATEMENT (Why we exist)

To follow Jesus: seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation

VALUES (Things that define us and do not change)

Honouring God - Loving Neighbour

VISION STATEMENT (What we aim to be)

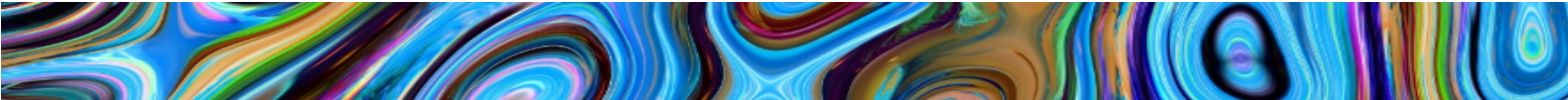
Congregations that are an expression of Jesus' Kingdom of God
-small, lay led, connected and relational in theology –

GOALS (What we will work on to be true to our vision)

- **Develop and source material and activities to: enable local congregations to flourish; develop and support local leaders (lay and ordained);**
- **Encourage and empower new transformative small groups and encourage discipleship.**
- **Explore together ways of practicing and speaking about faith that resonate with 21C Rural communities.**
- **Recognise, celebrate and draw on who we are, what we have and what we can do (not on what is missing).**
- **Use creative ways to communicate and to connect with the wider community.**

Presbytery Strategy in practice

Recognising that Presbytery resources of people are small, to date the Presbytery has focused on getting things in place to support existing congregations. We have done this by a strategic reworking of the role of Presbytery Ministers so that their primary task is relating to and resourcing lay leaders in congregations as these lay leaders take increasing responsibility for their congregations in worship, witness and service. The second stream of our plan is beginning to take effect: to identify and work with people who will be the church beyond the current congregational model. To do this Presbytery Standing Committee has endorsed a team approach in its staffing and has developed a three-year rolling plan to equip and support lay leaders.



Initially the Presbytery took the step of dividing the Presbytery in two, roughly along the line of the Hume Highway, asking newly appointed PM's to work east and west of that line, getting to know the leaders, working with them to identify their needs and then finding ways to meet that need, either themselves, or drawing on the wider resources of the Presbytery and Synod. This placement would allow the Presbytery to be divided into three, increasing the capacity of Presbytery Ministers to interact more closely with congregations and their leadership, deepening relationships and sharpening focus. In this step towards regionalisation the well-being of staff has also been high on the Presbytery agenda. The PM generalists, at times, also work together on projects that are common to the whole Presbytery, drawing on wider support within and outside the Presbytery, expanding the team approach. It is expected that the Mission Development Worker would also engage, from time to time in this sort of work.

The team meets each Monday on zoom for mutual support and planning and on an "as needed" basis at other times. The events organiser and technical support person join this meeting from time to time. This has been a significant change to the way the Presbytery operates.

Apart from the Presbytery team. The Standing Committee has seen its role as offering encouragement and stability in a time of transition, ably supported by the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Mission and Education Committee and the Property and Administration Committee.

This Presbytery is also reaching out to other rural Presbyteries to see where it is possible to share resources and to collaborate, particularly in the area of understanding our context and responding to it creatively. We think there is more to be gained by working together than by competing for scarce resources, including human resources. Currently we are working with Loddon Mallee Presbytery to produce worship material twice a month. It is hoped to extend this form of co-operation in future.

Description of the Presbytery

The Presbytery of North East Victoria stretches from Broadford in the South to the Murray River in the north and from Elmore in the west to Corryong in the east and contains the major centres of Albury-Wodonga, Echuca, Shepparton and Wangaratta. On an average Sunday 1100 people are gathered in 52 preaching places or faith communities, many grouped into clusters. More than half those preaching places have less than 15 people in attendance on a Sunday.

The Presbytery has 22 accredited Lay Preachers and it is anticipated that more will soon be in training. Currently the Presbytery is promoting the development of local pastors. Across the Presbytery there are 6 full-time and 2 part-time ministry agents and there are two unfilled placements. In addition Uniting Victas has a presence in the Presbytery, providing significant ministry/outreach in Shepparton, Wangaratta and Wodonga. More widely:

- Education, medical, social and care services are a vital part of all large centres;
- Scots School in Albury is a Uniting Church School;
- The church and the broader community is largely Anglo with pockets of people from the Pacific, Korea, Africa, Afghanistan and Iraq. There are also communities of First Nations people;
- The Presbytery is largely a fruit, wine and dairying area with some larger towns with the usual mix of commerce and light industry. Some small centres are in decline but there are also pockets of growth led by international and retirement migration;
- There is a wide range of educational, sporting and leisure opportunities around rivers and mountains.

The Purpose and Role of the Presbytery

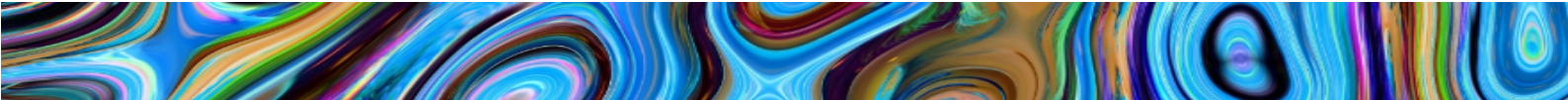
“Christ is the Good Shepherd who loves, knows, leads, protects, cares for and guides his flock. This is the loving oversight that God in Christ offers all creation, and calls the church to embody. In seeking to embody this oversight the church does so not for the church’s own sake, but for the sake of all God’s people.

Presbyteries are one means by which we as church discharge the ministry of oversight entrusted to us as followers of Christ at mission in the world. The Basis of Union (Paragraph 15, 1992 edition) describes the Presbytery’s function as the district council to:

...perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except for those agencies which are directly responsible to the Synod or Assembly. It will in particular exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another’s faith, to bear one another’s burdens and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus. It will promote those wider aspects of the work of the Church committed to it by the Synod or Assembly.” - Presbytery Transition Team Report, 2017, Section D1, pg D1.4

The core responsibilities of presbyteries are laid out in the Constitution and Regulations 3.1.3, and fall into three key areas: Pastoral, Mission/Education and Administration. When Presbyteries are functioning well, they contribute to the building up of the whole Body of Christ

- Congregations, agencies, faith communities and chaplaincies are supported and their life enriched;



- Congregations, agencies, faith communities and chaplaincies are helped in identifying and building their missional and ecumenical possibilities;
- Links between schools, agencies, faith communities, congregations and the wider church are forged and strengthened;
- People in ministry roles are encouraged, equipped and supported;
- Educational possibilities for congregations and those in ministry are facilitated;
- Intercultural relationships thrive;
- The relationship with Congress is strengthened; and
- Communication with the various parts of the Synod is clear, building up strong relationships between all councils of the Church.