

## The Fig Tree Project PLACEMENT PROFILE

### SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 Placement name:** Presbytery of Gippsland,  
Shearwater Ministry Team – vacancy 1.3FTE
- 1.2 The Shearwater ministry team works within the following congregations:**  
*(bold indicates current vacancy)*  
**Corner Inlet (Fish Creek Union Church, Foster, Toora), St John's - Cowes, Inverloch & Wonthaggi**, and is ecumenically connected with the Tarwin Lower Union Church.
- 1.3 Profile approved by the Presbytery of Gippsland (delegated to PRC) 11/09/19**
- 1.4 The Primary purpose of placement:**  
To exercise ministry within the Shearwater team:  
  - to know and to love congregations
  - to participate with congregations in their worship, ministry and mission
  - to share diverse gifts within the team
  - to offer collegial support and cooperation within the team
  - to encourage and empower entrepreneurial and innovative ministry together
- 1.5** Suitable for Minister of the Word / Deacon / Ordinand/ Pastor
- 1.6** The Shearwater ministry team has capacity for approximately 2.3 FTE  
  
The time fraction for each ministry placement is open to negotiation according to the ministry agents in the team.
- 1.7 Term:** Undefined up to 10 years (see Reg 2.7.3(a))  
  
Ministry within the Shearwater team will be open to the needs and capacities of the congregations. While the Terms of Placement are fixed, particular responsibilities will change in consultation and agreement with ministry agents, within the team and with the Presbytery.

# The Fig Tree Project – Ministry Teams in Gippsland

## Purpose of Ministry Teams

Through resourcing, support and leadership of the Presbytery, for ministry agents to:

- work cooperatively and share complimentary ministry, leadership & skills in Ministry Teams in the Presbytery of Gippsland;
- share mission and strategy within and beyond the gathered congregations;
- offer innovative and entrepreneurial ministry across the team
- be the primary pastoral minister for nominated congregations.

## Vision and Mission priorities of Ministry Teams

- For each ministry agent to find collegial and Presbytery support within teams
- For ministry agents to embrace a 'common wealth' model of cooperative ministry.
- For mission and strategy to be an ongoing journey of conversation and discernment under the leadership of Resourcing Presbytery ministers.
- To share gifts, skills, and time based on needs and initiatives of ministry offered by the team.

## Goals of Ministry Teams

- To love and to know congregations.
- To offer good leadership and support of ministers.
- To discern mission and strategic needs of ministry encompassed by the team
- To work creatively and cooperatively to meet ministry needs with available resources.
- To assist congregations in their mission and strategy.
- To encourage congregations to bless and support where possible emerging and innovative ministry beyond the gathered community.

## Resourcing of Teams

- The Presbytery of Gippsland is committed to provide training in team and innovative leadership.

## History of The Fig Tree Project and ministry in Gippsland

The Fig Tree Project was endorsed by the Presbytery of Gippsland in May 2019. It was born from the struggle of Mission Areas unable to meet ministry expectations and needs. At its simplest, the Fig Tree Project enables congregations to offer ministry in their own context without the need to combine with other congregations under complex structures. Ministry agents are called to the Presbytery into teams with pastoral responsibility for one or more congregations. The team model offers flexibility and a greater range of ministry gifts and skills.

# Corner Inlet

**Fish Creek Union Church** - Williamson St. Fish Creek   **Foster** - Station Rd, Foster   **Toora** – Dutton St, Toora

## SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Our congregations are small, friendly, supportive, caring, enthusiastic and faithful. Most of us are retired and aging. Those who contribute most actively to the life and work of the congregation find that, in a small congregation, there is a lot to be done by relatively few people and this can be a challenge. We need support to continue nurturing each other in our Christian faith and spiritual development. How do we bring Christianity, our faith, to those people who support our church buildings but are reluctant to attend our worship services?

## SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Corner Inlet is a dairying, cattle, fishing and tourist area located in South Gippsland, which includes the congregations of Foster, Fish Creek and Toora, with church buildings at each place as well as Hoddle, and a manse at Foster that has been rented for 10 years. The local area includes many popular holiday spots including Wilson's Promontory, Port Welshpool, Sandy Point, Waratah Bay and Walkerville with the area's population swelling markedly at peak holiday times such as Christmas and Easter. It also includes the popular Great Southern Rail Trail along the former railway line which brings many people into the area throughout the year. The central township of Foster contains the regional secondary college and the South Gippsland hospital, along with a residential aged care facility and well-respected Medical Centre and Community Health Care Centre that provides a wide range of allied health services. Corner Inlet boasts a rich artistic community including dance, film, theatre and music. The local football, netball, tennis, cricket and soccer clubs, along with an energetic basketball association are valued as important community assets. Each town has a distinctly different primary school and kindergarten offering diverse learning methods however most children move on to the secondary school in Foster, which also hosts a new and vibrant children's hub, meeting the needs of working parents.

# **St John's - Cowes**

80-84 Chapel St, Cowes – Phillip Island  
cowes.unitingchurch.org.au

## **SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION**

The St John's congregation is a friendly, inclusive group that exhibits strength in providing hospitality and pastoral care both within and beyond the congregation. The majority of the congregation is retired, and organisational meetings are held during the day although other gatherings, such as 'training' events and social and entertainment events can occur in the evening. There are several study groups that meet regularly. Members visit the Aged Care facilities in the area and participate in the fortnightly Worship Services that are conducted by The P.I. Inter Church Council at the three facilities on PI. Whilst the congregation appreciates a conventional service, members are open to participating in different styles of Worship, music, discussion and to be challenged. Services are often increased with attendance of "Shearwaters", people who have holiday houses on the Island. Holiday times also swell the Congregation. We are committed to and supportive of ecumenical involvement particularly with the Anglican Church, especially in occasionally leading Worship on the 5th Sunday at San Remo. There are also combined spiritual and social events. The congregation has many links and involvement in the local community through a range of community groups. Members participation in groups such as RAR, RYDA, St Vincents, PICAL, U3A, Market on Chapel, CWA, PI T&T provide an outward focus and involvement with the community.

## **SECTION 3 - CONTEXT**

Cowes has a larger than usual retired population, with many young families as well. Older teenagers are mainly away at tertiary study. Phillip Island is a major tourist destination, experiencing huge population increases in the warmer months and with events such as the Motorcycle Grand Prix. There is a significant proportion of the population on low income with limited employment opportunities. We have a strong local community with many opportunities to get involved in social or service groups.

# Inverloch

Williams St, Inverloch  
ucainverloch.blogspot.com

## SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

We seek to develop mission strategies that assist our congregation to become a dynamic church engaged in the community. Our congregation is friendly, supportive, caring, enthusiastic, responsive and faithful. Most of us are retired and many of us are relative newcomers to Inverloch. Members have brought with them a rich variety of experience and skills, contributing to the life and mission of our congregation. Some of our members are away particularly during the winter months. During the summer, attendances are swelled by visitors. Within our congregation there is a diversity of theological views, and preferences for aspects of congregational life such as the style of worship. Those who contribute most actively to the life and work of the congregation find that there is a lot to be done by relatively few people and this can be a challenge. Our goals include: To continue to explore new ways of being the church: To work out how best to use the resources we have (e.g. the Inverloch Church building is centrally located and needs to be creatively used in engaging the town and passers-by.) Become more involved with the local community. Develop a leadership model that recognises, nurtures and encourages all members to use their gifts in the context of administration, mission and ministry, especially when new people come to the congregation. Provide funeral outreach. Develop a stronger and more active group for advocacy and social justice. Refresh pastoral care practices. Recognise and connect with first peoples. Become a learning hub for faith and ministry.

## SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Inverloch is a beachside rural community with a population of 5,437 with a median age of 52 and with 340 identifying with the UCA. Almost half the dwellings are holiday homes. There are numbers of retired people moving into the town from farms, Melbourne and interstate. We lack young children, older children, and families with school aged children and have regular holiday visitors; "sandpipers". As Inverloch is an older community there are ongoing health issues and an opportunity for ministry to aged care. There is work commuter stress and points of stress for parents of secondary students due to use of drugs and alcohol and low school ambition and achievement. The influx of holiday residents is an opportunity, as are the new houses being built and a growing population of young children and families. The town is well serviced by community organisations, Service clubs, sporting clubs, churches, an environment centre and a library and information centre. Opportunities to engage with other churches and the community include: the community House, Reconciliation Group, and Rural Group for refugees. Jazz Festival services. Pancake Day. World day of Prayer, Carol Singing in the street, Hymn Fest, Service to Residents of Seahaven Aged Care, Biggest Morning Tea. Sausage sizzle, car boot sale, Inter-church Council partnership with Bass Coast Health, Easter Dawn Service at Eagles' Nest and afterwards at Cape Paterson, Wonthaggi Primary School Breakfast Club.

# Wonthaggi

8 Broome Cres, Wonthaggi  
ucawonthaggi.blogspot.com

## SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Our Mission statement is: "Growing in Christ and Sharing His Love" and although we are an ageing congregation, we are mostly very active in the church and local community. We enjoy getting to know people, and feedback tells us that visitors and prospective members appreciate the warm, friendly welcome and follow up – that's why they come back. Our goals are: to continue in our faith by sharing Christ's message and love where we can, to continue in our full support of our own people and fellow Christians, to be supportive and co-operative with the Pastorate, whatever eventuates, to be open to opportunities for more outreach that we can faithfully and realistically handle and to fully support our minister and the Shearwater Ministry Team. We need to make sure we are all on the same page through good communication, careful and respectful listening and sharing opinions and keeping people updated on any progress, when and why things are happening, and any co-operative actions required. Over the past 5 years our minister has had to travel more, a few folk have come to stay but others have moved away to family, care facilities or have died. Our outreach includes offering pastoral care and leading worship in Aged Care Homes and the hospital Rehab Centre. We cater for funerals and other events as an opportunity to connect with families, friends and others needing practical support with Christian action in a no-pressure sort of way. Teamwork within the church includes our pastoral visiting and good group participation in all aspects of church life.

## SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Wonthaggi is a fast-growing community and expected to become 'a hub' for the area. The population is 8034 with 306 identifying as UCA. Municipal offices, hospital & rehab facilities, comforting access to doctors and specialists locally, good Aged Care, educational and sporting facilities are all part of our community. We have 2 childcare centres, 3 play groups, 2 kindergartens, 3 Primary Schools, 2 Secondary Campuses and one Special School. The town has many service organisations, schools, sporting clubs and arts facilities. There is a high proportion of retirees, but the community is more family orientated than in earlier days. We are in an area of many holiday homes and tourist attractions, being close to beaches; Inverloch, Phillip Island & Cape Paterson and also many of Gippsland's attractions. We are an older congregation and don't reflect the demographic of the area, but have had the opportunity in recent years to engage in community activities with Sudanese people, Keren refugees and Muslims and we are open, accepting and supportive of the reality of cultural diversity, having also had a Sri Lankan minister for 4 years. Opportunities for mission occur with the Inter-Church Council through the Community Carols and Pastoral Care Volunteers program. Points of stress in the community include high youth unemployment, alcohol and other drug addictions, homelessness and the pressure of drought on the physical and mental well-being of farmers. Mortgage stress is increasing with new estates and bigger homes mushrooming around the area. We partner with the community in a mentoring and breakfast program in a Primary School, through the Inter-Church council with events and pastoral care and catering for funerals, led by a minister or celebrant, in our church.