

The Fig Tree Project PLACEMENT PROFILE

SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 Placement name:** Presbytery of Gippsland,
Currawong Ministry Team - vacancy 0.6 FTE
- 1.2 The Currawong ministry team works within the following congregations:**
(bold indicates current vacancy)
Heyfield, Maffra, Sale, and Stratford & Perry Bridge (faith community),
and includes ministry connections with Fulham Correctional Centre & Sale RAAF base
- 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 Currawong 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 Currawong ministry team has capacity for approximately 2.4 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 Currawong 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.

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

“Christ, Community and Caring” - The majority of our members are very committed, flexible and enthusiastic assisting with Church services, administration and mission. The main demographic is from 50 to 95 years old and our congregation is stable and very much reflects the local community. We enjoy special services and events such as Carol Service, Blue Christmas, Christmas pageant for the district, Pancake night, Church Camp at Lake Tyers. We lead services at Aged Care facility - Laurina Lodge and participate in the Heyfield Saturday market/garage sale, offering welfare assistance and community connections that come of this. Our next steps are for new life, leadership and encouragement with support to embrace some change. The steps will be an evolution from working together to assess the needs of the community in collaboration with ministry leadership. We need ideas that are achievable but not too daunting.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Maffra and Heyfield are two small rural Anglo-European communities, which contain separate Uniting Church congregations who have shared a minister for a number of years. Both towns are approximately 2-3 hours' drive from Melbourne, with the nearest regional centres being Sale (pop ~14000; 19km away), Traralgon (pop ~25000; 60km away) and Bairnsdale (pop ~ 7500; 65km away). We are active and dynamic communities with many service clubs, community and interest groups, probably proportionally more than in other rural communities. Across the two towns, there is good access to health and aged care, schools (kindergartens, state and Catholic primary and secondary schools), with a wider range of educational options, including TAFE, available nearby in Sale, but there is a need for many students to move away to larger centres for tertiary education. Many of the issues facing Maffra and Heyfield are common to many rural areas; housing issues, financial stress and an increase in drug & alcohol use among young people.

Overall, we are strong communities in both Heyfield and Maffra and very supportive and generous of the many charities that we have in our community. Some local issues are drought, milk prices fluctuating and causing stress, Heyfield timber mill uncertainty re jobs and goods supply. However, both towns are full of vehicles, have several places where you can buy good coffees and have very few closed shops. The towns are relatively close to the hills the sea and rivers for outdoor pursuits and the Glenmaggie Weir for water sports and provision of irrigation to dairy farms and agricultural produce. Nature's extremes such as fires and floods impact on both districts at times. There are Government and Catholic primary schools in both Heyfield and Maffra as well as a secondary college in Maffra to which Heyfield students attend along with students from 13 district feeder primary schools. There is a Catholic secondary college a private Anglican secondary college and a specialist school, as well as a TAFE, in the nearby town of Sale about 20 km away. There are two kindergartens in Maffra, one Kindergarten in Heyfield and childcare in both towns.

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

"Christ, Community and Caring" The majority of our members are very committed, flexible and enthusiastic. They assist with Church services, administration and mission. The main demographic is from 50 to 95 years old, with attendance by a few grandchildren. The congregation is stable and in the last 18 months since being in a vacancy and despite attrition due to some deaths, extra people have attended the services fairly regularly. We very much reflect the local community and enjoy ecumenical involvement with Maffra Combined Churches group. Special services and events such as Carol Service, Blue Christmas, Christmas pageant for the district, Pancake night, Church Camp at Lake Tyers, lead Maffra Primary School Breakfast club once a week and support Secondary School Breakfast Club, monthly activities for children on Sunday morning, monthly services at Aged Care facilities - Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra. Maffra Quilt group fortnightly, Sewing Group fortnightly, weekly open morning coffee, Jack Kelly BBQ monthly, street stalls, market days, UCAF, UCAF catering for funerals, jam making, Food bank, Backpacks and Christmas boxes.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Maffra and Heyfield are two small rural Anglo-European communities, which contain separate Uniting Church congregations who have shared a minister for around 10 years. Both towns are approximately 2-3 hours' drive from Melbourne, with the nearest regional centres being Sale (pop ~14000; 19km away), Traralgon (pop ~25000; 60km away) and Bairnsdale (pop ~ 7500; 65km away). We are active and dynamic communities with many service clubs, community and interest groups, probably proportionally more than in other rural communities. Across the two towns, there is good access to health and aged care, schools (kindergartens, state and Catholic primary and secondary schools), with a wider range of educational options, including TAFE, available nearby in Sale, but there is a need for many students to move away to larger centres for tertiary education. Many of the issues facing Maffra and Heyfield are common to many rural areas; housing issues, financial stress and an increase in drug & alcohol use among young people. We use natural gas for heating and cooking.

Sale – St Columba's, Corner Macalister and Raymond Streets,

NB: Information taken from the previous profile written in February 2014

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Sale is a city with an Anglican and a Catholic cathedral, and is a centre for regional church activities. It is appropriate that the Uniting Church has a Minister of the Word based in Sale to foster Ecumenism and to join in the broader ministry of the Church. Like many Uniting Church congregations we are a group of enthusiastic older people who seek a leader who will work alongside the lay people in our Mission and Ministry. We seek a Minister of the Word to nurture, encourage and support the community of faith. Like many UCA congregations the average age is increasing with few members under 60 years of age. However many members remain active in church and community activities and want to remain involved for as long as possible. We are a very receptive and open community, welcoming of all people and willing to try new approaches.

Goals:

- 1 To better understand and respond to the needs in the local community and to develop mission initiatives.
- 2 To deepen the faith and spirituality of the congregation
- 3 To enhance the ministry of the eldership
- 4 To develop more group life within the Church- Bible study, etc
- 5 To develop a working relationship with Uniting Care Gippsland-explore social needs within the community
- 6 To revisit Messy Church

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Medium sized rural city; ageing population; young people leave for study and work
Key industries include: RAAF base, gas and oil production, Agriculture, education centre Fulham Prison.; Wellington Shire central offices
A variety of govt and non-govt social support services such as UnitingCare Gippsland.

Central Gippsland Health Service

Hospital Visiting

3 Aged Care Facilities

Worship Services and Visiting

Wurruk Neighbourhood House

Representatives on Management Committee

Sale Men's Shed

Ongoing Support

Sale College has a full time Chaplain; The congregation supports the Chaplaincy Program.

The Church enabled the Wurruk Community House to be built, and has an historic connection

The Church has provided part funding for the new Men's Shed building, which is located on Church property.

Stratford

& Perry Bridge Faith Community

NB: This information is taken from the previous profile from March 2012

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

We, the people of the Uniting Church of Stratford and linked congregations believe we are called by God to be a caring community of Christians, desiring to share God's love, word and truth with the community around us.

The development of 10 independent living units on church land adjacent to the Church buildings in Stratford in partnership with UnitingCare Gippsland has been the fulfilment of a vision for property improvements that meet a demonstrated community need, support our ministry and mission, while continuing to address necessary repairs and maintenance. The units will be available for occupancy in April 2012.

The Parish has successfully adapted to the shift from 1.0 full time provision of ministry to 0.8 EFT, with a range of members willing and able regularly to share in the leadership of worship

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Stratford is basically a rural farming community but the employment base is significantly moulded by the presence of the oil and gas industry, the RAAF base in Sale, the Fulham Correctional Services facility and the huge variety of support services that are in the district. Stratford's proximity to other major centres makes it an attractive dormitory town chosen for its relaxed lifestyle and appreciation of the arts.