



LUTHERAN
CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA

NSW and ACT DISTRICT

THE GREAT CO- MISSION

MATT 28:19-20

*"As you go, make disciples,
baptize them, teach them, and
know I am with you always."*

LCA NSW and ACT District
41st Convention of Synod

7-9 August 2026
Warrambui

Book of Reports

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Daily Program

Friday

6:00pm	Registration/ <i>Optional Dinner</i>	1:30pm	Welcome into Membership: Jalal Evangelical Lutheran Church
7:00	Opening Worship		Frontier School of Mission
7:45	Welcome to Synod; Introductions; Roll Call; Minute Takers; Membership; Nominations 1 st Reading	1.45	LEVNT
		2.00	St Paul's College
8:00	LCA Bishop	2.30	Lutheran Media
	LCA EDCO	2:45	Nominations and Elections
	LCA International Mission	3:00	<i>Afternoon tea</i>
9:00pm	Closing Prayer	3:30	Lutheran Aged Care
		4.00	ALWS
		4.15	Lutheran Women NSW & ACT
		4:45	NSW District Budget 2nd Reading and discussion

Saturday

7:00am	Prayer	5:00	Closing Devotion – In Memoriam
8:30	Morning Devotion	5:30	<i>Pre-dinner break</i>
9:00	District Bishop	6:30	<i>Dinner</i>
	Mission and Ministry Team	9:00pm	Closing Prayer
	Strategic Facilitators		
10:30	<i>Morning tea</i>		
11:00	LLL		
11.15	Warrambui		
11.45	DCC Report		
	Treasurer		
	Administrator Report		
	District Budget		
	Proposals		
12:15pm	Nominations 2 nd Reading		
	NSW District Budget 1 st Reading		
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>		

Sunday

7:00am	Prayer
8:30	Morning Devotion
8:45	District Bishop
	Going Forward in Mission
9:45	Closing formalities
10:15	<i>Morning tea</i>
11:00am	Closing Service and Close of Convention
12:30pm	<i>Lunch</i>

Constituting of Convention

Bishop: Jesus said, "All authority has been given to me"

Assembly: and as we go about our lives

Bishop: we are to make disciples of all nations

Assembly: baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Bishop: and teaching them to obey everything he has commanded

Assembly: and Jesus promises to be with us always and all the time.

Bishop: The Lord be with you.

Assembly: And also with you.

Bishop: Let us pray: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named: Grant, we pray, to your church here assembled, the presence of the Holy Spirit, so that in all our deliberations we may be guided in all truth, preserved from strife and vain glory, and, one in you, may constantly abide in that Christian unity which is well pleasing in your sight.

Let us together give expression to our Confession as contained in the Constitution of the Church.

Assembly: We accept without reservation the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, written and inerrant Word of God, and as the only infallible source and norm for all matters of Faith, Doctrine, and Life. We acknowledge and accept as true expositions of the Word of God and as our own Confession all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, namely, the Three Ecumenical Creeds, The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed; The Unaltered Augsburg Confession; The Apology of the Augsburg Confession; The Smalcald Articles; The Small Catechism of Luther, The Large Catechism of Luther; and the Formula of Concord.

Bishop: I now declare this Forty-first Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church of Australia, NSW and ACT District, open; In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And now may the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has called us with a holy calling, and has committed to our trust the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, make you to increase and abound in love toward one another, and toward all people, that you may be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Assembly: Amen.

Agenda

A. Preliminaries

1. Formal Constitution of Convention

a. Opening

2. Conduct of Business

a. Voting

Be it resolved that decisions be reached by consensus or by vote in the manner decided by the Chairman.

3. Appointments

a. Synod Chairperson

b. Minute Secretaries

c. Committee for Verification of Minutes

d. Tellers

e. Reporter: 'Contact'

Be it resolved that the above named persons be appointed to serve this Synodical Convention.

4. Welcome

a. By NSW and ACT District Bishop:

Pr Richard Schwedes

b. Warrambui Manager

c. By Others

5. Roll Call

a. Beginning of Session 1: Secretary

b. Attendance Report: Secretary

6. Greetings

7. Apologies

8. Adoption of Minutes

The NSW and ACT DCC has vetted the 40th Regular Synodical Convention Minutes as circulated to the 2024 delegates and congregation secretaries and recommends their adoption.

Be it resolved that the minutes of the 40th Regular Synodical Convention, 2024, be adopted.

9. Reading of Reports and Statements

Be it resolved that published reports be taken as read and received unless otherwise indicated.

10. Adoption of Reports and Statements

Be it resolved that at the close of Convention reports and statements tabled during Convention be adopted.

11. Proposals

Be it resolved that agenda proposals be taken as moved and seconded.

Be it resolved that additional late proposals be taken as moved and seconded.

Be it resolved that all tabled reports and proposals in the report book and late proposals and reports be accepted and debated at the appropriate time.

12. Convention Minutes

Be it resolved that the appointed Committee for the verification of minutes, vet Synodical Convention minutes, correct where necessary and recommend publication of the minutes to the Secretary.

13. Membership

a. Welcome:

Jalal Evangelical Lutheran Church (Pakistani)

Be it resolved that Convention welcomes the Jalal Evangelical Lutheran Church (Pakistani) into membership.

14. First Reading of Nominations

B. LCA NSW and ACT District

1. Bishop's Report Pr Richard Schwedes

a. Welcome to NSW and ACT District

The following pastors have been installed in the NSW and ACT District since last Synodical Convention:

Pr Nich Kitchen

Pr Bruce Flanagan

Pr Jacob Traeger

The following pastors have accepted calls within the NSW and ACT District since last Synodical Convention:

Pr Richard Schwedes (Bishop)

Pr Mat von Stanke (re called)

Pr Mark Worthing (re called)

Pr Mark Simpfendorfer

Agenda

Be it resolved that Convention welcome with joy these pastors and their families and pray that these co-workers will be richly blessed personally and bring many blessings both to their parishioners and to the NSW and ACT District.

b. Thanks for ministries

The following pastors have accepted calls to positions outside the NSW and ACT District since last Synodical Convention:

Pr Mark Schultz

Pr James Leach

Pr Sahat Simanullang

The following pastor has concluded ministry and is without a call:

Pr Allan Taruste

The following pastor has retired from pastoral ministry:

Pr Ian Rentsch

The following pastor has resigned from the LCA Roll of Pastors:

Pr Christian Fandrich

The following pastor has passed away:

Pr Samuel Simpfendorfer

Be it resolved that Convention place on record its sincere thanks to the above named pastors for their faithful ministries while serving the NSW and ACT District.

2. Mission and Ministry

a. Strategic Facilitators

3. LLL

4. Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre:

a. Warrambui Board

b. Financial statements and auditor's report

5. District Church Council

6. NSW and ACT District Budget

a. Treasurer's Report

b. Financial Statements

c. Auditor's Report

7. Administrator

a. 2026 NSW and ACT District Budget

b. Endorsement of the 2026 NSW and ACT

District Budget

c. Property Trust

8. Proposals

9. Nominations: Second Reading

10. Frontier School of Mission

11. Schools in NSW and ACT

a. Lutheran Education Victoria,

NSW, Tasmania and ACT (LEVNT)

b. St Paul's College, Walla Walla

12. Lutheran Media

13. Nomination and Election of Officers

a. Nominations: Third Reading

b. Elections

c. Declaration of elections

Be it resolved that Convention note the results of the 2026 elections and the District Church Council appointments.

14. Lutheran Aged Care

Albury Aged Care: Management, Financial Statements and Auditor's report

15. ALWS

16. Lutheran Women of NSW and ACT

17. In Memoriam

18. Closing Formalities

Be it resolved that Reports and statements tabled at Convention be adopted.

Be it resolved that unfinished business be referred to the District Church Council for action.

a. Next Synod 2028

b. Vote of Thanks

19. Convention Closing Worship Service

Nominations

Within the District any parish, congregation or member of a congregation may nominate a person for a position that is marked Synod in the 'nomination from' column. When nominating use the form marked '[2026 District Nomination Details](#)' available from District Office (phone 8660 1200 or office.nsw@lca.org.au) and from Nominations Committee Convenor, Tony von Brandenstein.

This worksheet shows positions, those elected/appointed at/since 2024 Convention, sitting personnel, and who can nominate a candidate – Nomination from. Sitting personnel are eligible for re nomination.

Positions marked 'DCC' are appointed by the District Church Council but you are also invited to nominate people for these positions for DCC's consideration.

= indicates not seeking nomination
= nomination needed

Nominee's name = further nominations can be made

2026 Convention Elections/DCC appointments

Section 1. Synod Election

<i>Position</i>	<i>Elected/appointed</i>	<i>Sitting (as at July 2026)</i>	<i>Nominee</i>	<i>Nomination from</i>
ADMINISTRATION				
BISHOP (elected for 2 Synodical terms – currently to 2028)				
	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Conference & Synod
ASSISTANT BISHOP				
	Pr John Borchert	Pr John Borchert	Pr John Borchert	Pr Conference & Synod
REGIONAL PASTORS				
Canberra	Pr Tim Muller	Pr Tim Muller		Pr Conference
Coastal North	Pr Mat von Stanke	Pr Mat von Stanke		Pr Conference
Coastal South	Pr Mat von Stanke	Pr Mat von Stanke		Pr Conference
North West	Pr Darren Kupke	Pr Darren Kupke		Pr Conference
Riverina	Pr David Jarman	Pr David Cherry		Pr Conference
SECRETARY				
	Leigh Caldwell	Leigh Caldwell	Leigh Caldwell	Synod
TREASURER				
	Bruce Arnold	Bruce Arnold	Bruce Arnold	Synod
DISTRICT CHURCH COUNCIL				
9 members (skills-based structure) Bishop, Assistant Bishop, Secretary, Treasurer, 1 pastor, 4 Lay				
Pastor	Pr Darren Jaensch	Pr Darren Jaensch	Pr Darren Jaensch	Pr Conference & Synod
Layperson	Jarmo Ronneberg	Jarmo Ronneberg	Jarmo Ronneberg	Synod
Layperson	Jeannie Kenney	Jeannie Kenney	Jeannie Kenney	Synod
Layperson	Tony von Brandenstein	Tony von Brandenstein	Tony von Brandenstein	Synod
Layperson	Ward Westphal	Ward Westphal #	Garth Schultz	Synod
			Garry Watson	
Consultant:				
Administrator	Russell Veerhuis	Stephen Fogerty	Stephen Fogerty	

Nominations

Position	Elected/appointed	Sitting (as at July 2026)	Nominee	Nomination from
PROPERTY TRUST				
<i>5 members: 3 elected by Synod, 2 appointed by DCC.</i>				
Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	DCC appointed
Administrator	Russell Veerhuis	Stephen Fogerty	Stephen Fogerty	DCC appointed
Assistant Bishop	Pr John Borchert	Pr John Borchert	Pr John Borchert	Synod
Secretary	Leigh Caldwell	Leigh Caldwell	Leigh Caldwell	Synod
	Kaye Simpfendorfer	Kaye Simpfendorfer	Kaye Simpfendorfer	Synod

WELFARE

LUTHERAN AGE CARE, ALBURY BOARD OF GOVERNANCE

7 members, including one pastor. 7 nominated by Board for election by Synod

Chairperson	Tim McInnes	David Smith	David Smith	LACA
Executive Director	Ron Asquith	Ron Asquith	Ron Asquith	LACA
Executive Director	Wendy Rocks	Wendy Rocks	Wendy Rocks	LACA
Pastor	Pr Christian Fandrich			LACA
	Louise Ward	Louise Ward	Louise Ward	LACA
	David Smith	Paul Vogelsang	Paul Vogelsang	LACA
			Christian Fandrich	LACA

AUXILIARIES

WARRAMBUI MANAGEMENT BOARD

11 Members. DCC appoints Committee Treasurer and DCC rep. 9 elected by Synod, one being a pastor

Chairperson	Neal Mason	Neal Mason		Synod
Vice Chairperson	Garry Watson	Garry Watson		Synod
Secretary	Donald McLean	Donald McLean		Synod
Treasurer	Hanne Paton	Hanne Paton		DCC appointed
Pastor	Pr James Leach			Synod
DCC Rep	Ward Westphal	Ward Westphal #		DCC appointed
	Geoff Hartwig	Geoff Hartwig		Synod
	Brianna O'Keefe	Brianna O'Keefe		Synod
		Anita Short		Synod
		Pr Dennis Obst		Synod
				Synod

Ex Officio:

Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes
District Treasurer	Bruce Arnold	Bruce Arnold	Bruce Arnold
Consultant:			
Retreat Director	Dean Salzke	Berndt Hahnert	Berndt Hahnert

Section 2. DCC Appointments for Synod Endorsement *Synod can nominate for DCC appointments*

FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Consists of at least six members: The Treasurer, Administrator, a pastor and others.

Treasurer	Bruce Arnold	Bruce Arnold	Bruce Arnold	
Administrator	Russell Veerhuis	Stephen Fogerty	Stephen Fogerty	
Pastor	Pr David Cherry	Pr David Cherry	Pr David Cherry	DCC Appointed
	Andrew Hoffmann	Andrew Hoffmann	Andrew Hoffmann	DCC Appointed
	Mark Waldron	Mark Waldron	Mark Waldron	DCC Appointed
	Hanne Patton	Hanne Patton	Hanne Patton	DCC Appointed
Ex Officio: Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	Pr Richard Schwedes	

Nominations

Position	Elected/appointed	Sitting (as at July 2026)	Nominee	Nomination from
NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE				
<i>5 members, 2 pastors 3 lay people</i>				
Convenor	Tony von Brandenstein	Tony von Brandenstein	Tony von Brandenstein	DCC Appointed
Assistant Bishop	Pr John Borchert	Pr John Borchert	Pr John Borchert	DCC Appointed
Pastor	Pr Ian Rentsch	Pr Ian Rentsch	Pr Ian Rentsch	DCC Appointed
Secretary	Leigh Caldwell	Leigh Caldwell	Leigh Caldwell	DCC Appointed
	Kaye Simpfendorfer	Kaye Simpfendorfer	Kaye Simpfendorfer	DCC Appointed

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

LWNSW&ACT SPIRITUAL ADVISORS

Pr Mark Simpfendorfer	Pr Mark Simpfendorfer		LW NSW&ACT
Pr Darryl Shoesmith	Pr Darryl Shoesmith		LW NSW&ACT

EDUCATION

LUTHERAN EDUCATION, VICTORIA, NEW SOUTH WALES & TASMANIA (LEVNT) NSW Members

2 members

Marianne Hammerton	Marianne Hammerton		DCC appointed
Kevin Klose	Jodi Glading		DCC appointed

ST PAUL'S COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

6 members: Appointed by LEVNT endorsed by DCC

Chairperson	Anthony Schultz	Anthony Schultz	Anthony Schultz	LEVNT
Vice Chairperson	Anthony Lieschke	Charlotte Rose	Charlotte Rose	LEVNT
	Jenny Zweck	Jenny Zweck	Jenny Zweck	LEVNT
	Robyn Armstrong	Robyn Armstrong	Robyn Armstrong	LEVNT
	Charlotte Rose	Duncan Howard	Duncan Howard	LEVNT
	Lauren Howard	Darcy McFarland	Darcy McFarland	LEVNT

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

NSW ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Alison Short	Alison Short	Alison Short	DCC appointed
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COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Johann Lorenzsonn	Johann Lorenzsonn		DCC appointed
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Section 3. NSW and ACT Representatives in LCA Roles

LUTHERAN LAYPEOPLE'S LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS NSW Representatives

David Kalisch	David Kalisch	David Kalish	GCB appointed
Deepa Justus			GCB appointed

LCA JUDICIAL TRIBUNAL NSW Rep (Nominated by DCC for GCB appointment)

Jim Ironside	Jim Ironside	Jim Ironside	GCB appointed
			GCB appointed

District Bishop



Bishop Richard Schwedes

I begin my report, with an ancient prayer that is found in many ancient and modern liturgies of the church: **Come, Holy Spirit Come.**

Remembering we are part of God's church and His mission, and rely on God's Holy Spirit working for us and through us.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus, Mission and the Church are three very powerful and important words for us.

At our last synod we adopted the synodical focus for 2024-2026 that who we are is **all about Jesus** leading us to our synodical focus for 2026-28, the **Great Co-Mission**. In other words, our focus is **Jesus, Mission and the Church**.

I pray that **Jesus, Mission and the church** constantly be our focus, your personal focus, the focus of all our congregations, our schools, our aged care facility, Warrambui and all who are part of the Lutheran Church in NSWACT and the wider Lutheran Church of Australia.

Being focussed on Jesus, Mission and the church is essential in living out Gospel lives especially as we live in a distracted, problem filled, self-focussing, money dominated, constantly changing and burdensome life.

So, it is important to ask what does it look like if we approached these issues and every situation we face by focussing on Jesus, His Mission and the church, seeing how Jesus is present in these situations for us and through us?

As I have travelled around and aimed to serve our District, I have regularly expressed the following to our DCC, Mission and Ministry Workers (Pastors, Lay Workers and Staff) and congregations that my priority is focussing on:

- **BEING JESUS FOCUSED** – focussing on the mission and

ministry Jesus gives us, and His Good News

- **HOPE** – there is always hope and to encourage a sense of hope
- **CHANGE** – being prepared to respond to and be part of change, helping congregations and ministries with change, and even encouraging change.
- **PEOPLE FOCUSED** – remember the church is God's people gathered around His Word and Sacrament. Looking at ways of encouraging and developing people.

This focus continues to help me be focussed on **Jesus, Mission and the Church**.

MISSION FOCUS

We have a strong focus on mission in our District, and it is important to understand what we mean about being mission focussed.

1. It is God's mission we are focussed on. God has invited us to be involved in His mission.
2. Being involved in God's mission is concerned with connecting people to Jesus, so they believe and trust in Jesus' saving actions which give them and us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.
3. Everything we do as part of God's church should be influenced and guided by this mission of connecting people to Jesus.
4. Because only the Holy Spirit will lead people to connecting people to Jesus, we need to be open to the Holy Spirit working through us as God's community.
5. We also need to be utilising what God has given us - Jesus, His word and His Sacraments. It is therefore essential that all our activities ultimately lead people to connecting to Jesus through His church community, His word and His sacraments.
6. Practical Mission looks like:
 - a. When we are involved in an activity of helping someone or meeting with someone, it is important for us to think about how can we let them know that Jesus

is actually loving them and helping them.

- b. When we engage with the scriptures and are sharing the scriptures with others, look for and share what God is doing and the long lasting love God has for us and others.
- c. Every time we worship focus on only two questions, What is God saying to me/us today? What is God calling me to share with others?

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

In 2019 we adopted our Strategic Directions – **Walking Together in Mission**. This is our understanding as a Synod and District of how we live focussed on Jesus, Mission and the church.

Walking Together in Mission means that as a District we will aim to:

- **Support** congregations in their mission and ministry
- Support congregations and ministries in their **transition**
- Explore and encourage **alternative models** of ministry that best suit the District
- **Plant and renew** congregations
- **Develop and support networks and connections** between congregations and ministries
- **Encourage leadership** through the Bishop leading teams

Over the last seven years our efforts and energies on sharing the Gospel as a church have been shaped by these 6 elements of our strategic directions. I believe they can continue to serve us, but I have also indicated to our DCC that we should look at reviewing and refreshing our Strategic Direction in 2027.

MY OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WHERE GOD HAS PLACED US

BIBLICAL, CONFSSIONAL AND MISSIONAL FOCUSED CHURCH

It is important to remember and remind others that we are a church that is:

CHANGING

We are constantly living with change. It is part of our life. Some of this

change is happening around us, some of this change we can respond well to, some of this change we can do little about and some of this change we can initiate and influence.

It is helpful to see that in Lutheran NSWACT congregation and ministry life and the wider church that some are growing, some stagnating, and some dying.

Where is your congregation or ministry – growing – stagnant – dying?

What might God be saying to you and your community in how you can respond well to the changes?

CONGREGATIONS ARE DIVERSE AND CHANGING – AND NEED TO WORK BETTER TOGETHER

No two congregations are the same. Many of our congregations are changing. And because Jesus is incarnational, ie. he comes to people, our congregations also come to people differently with Jesus. Some will not have a resident pastor and rely on lay people alone for much of their daily ministry and mission activity. Some are thriving in these situations' others are struggling. It is also important to remember that the ministry in a Lutheran Confessional context involves the oversight of an ordained Lutheran pastor, but this does not need to be the same as we experienced previously.

What is unique about your congregation?

How is your congregation changing or likely to change?

How can we as a District better serve you so you can serve not just your congregation members, but the wider community God has placed you in with the Gospel?

SIGNIFICANT MIGRANT POPULATION

Australia continues to be a growing diverse multicultural community.

Our church historically was seen as a migrant church – a church for Europeans, in particular Germans, Finns, Latvians, Estonians, Swedes, Danish. Many of the families in our congregations have this ancestry. I remember when I began working in Melbourne, when someone found out that I went to the Lutheran church, their response was 'but you are not German.'

Today 27% of Australia's population are people born overseas. 50% of children have one parent born overseas. In 3 local government areas in NSW more than 50% of the population consist of people born overseas.

The main countries where people have immigrated from are England, India, China, New Zealand, Philippines, Nepal and Vietnam.

As people called to share the New Testament Gospel message of Jesus it is helpful for us to keep in mind that through Jesus God came for all, no matter who you are, where you have come from or what your background is. And part of God's story is that people from different cultures also bring the Gospel to us.

What does the population look like in the community where God has placed your congregation and ministries?

How might you engage with others, including people from a different ethnic background better?

PROPERTY – COST AND ACCESS

Having a place for people to gather is important for the Christian community. Much research suggests that many people (especially introverts) prefer a neutral or third space, not a private home to meet with others, and belief they are attending a credible organisation. Property plays an important role in our ministries. Unfortunately, sometimes property is just seen as a burden – with talk about the cost of money and time to maintain, etc.... however, remember property can be a needed resource for ministry...whether in its current form or another form.

There are two challenges we face also when it comes to property:

1. Cost of acquiring property is high...if we sell, we may lose access to a ministry area
2. Gaining access to community properties is becoming more difficult for a regular gathering group.

How is your current property a resource?

How might your current property be better used to connect with the community, so they meet your church community and Jesus?

Can your property be better utilised to raise funds for your ministry and mission or for your members to better connect with people?

AGING CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

In Australia we are an aging population (current medium age 42, 16% of the population are over 65 and this expected to double by 2042, and by 2042 there will be over 1 million people over 85). So, no wonder I hear that many of our congregations are aging.

The aging demographic is not a reason to neglect younger adults, youth or children. We should continue to encourage them to be part of God's community which we are part of. This involves being open to what will help them connect, grow and share.

It is also important for us to recognise that being an aging church in an aging population provides us with some natural opportunities to serve each other and reach others who are older with the Gospel. We should assess our expectations and ministry to ensure we are serving our community and potential community well.

I am currently adapting some material provided by a Lutheran missionary pastor in the USA who focusses on growing congregations in the aging community with an aging congregation. Hopefully this will be available to you later this year.

How has your congregation changed over the years?

What do you think an active ministry by the aging church and to the aging community look like?

How do and can we serve both the aging community, and children youth and families?

CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Ministry in the areas of child, youth and families has been and continues to change in two areas.

First there is an increasing requirement regarding compliance with a focus on us being a safer place for the vulnerable. In 2026 most states and territories increased the number of investigations and increased fining people and organisations for noncompliance. So please keep up to date with Working with Children and/or Working with Vulnerable People checks, Safe

Church training and Child Safe Standards.

Secondly with a smaller pool of children and youth in most congregations we need to change how we approach ministries, camping ministries, first communion, confirmation and supporting old and new families.

How might we connect better with children, youth and families?

WE ARE PART OF LCA NZ - SYNOD

It is important to recognise that we undertake our local ministries and ministries in NSWACT not alone but as part of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand. So, it is important consider the wider church as we minister locally. This also means that the decisions and practices of the LCA NZ have an effect on us. It is also important that the wider church understands and considers our context and the challenges we face, not make decisions that place unnecessary barriers in us receiving and sharing the Gospel in NSWACT. At times this occurs well, other times there are challenges. We need to keep encouraging a culture that serves the diverse range of local ministries well in their context. This also means we have a responsibility of participating well at pastor's conference, synodical conventions, wider church events, giving regular feedback when requested, and speaking up respectfully and clearly.

Four recent practical ways we are affected by being part of the LCA NZ

- Synodical decisions and policies (e.g. Ordination of men and women and SMP decisions)
- Preparing of pastors through ALC
- Grants – LCA Local Mission Grants, LLL Mission Stimulus Grants, LLL Camping Ministry Grants (Better Blokes, Sisterhood, and Young Adults in 2027)

WALKING TOGETHER IN MISSION ACTIVITY

We are not in this alone, Jesus promises to be with us always to the very end of the age and God has placed us into communities – as congregations, ministries and leaders. Let us continue to work collaboratively, respond creatively to the continual changing contexts, whilst remaining centred on the

Gospel of Jesus Christ, as we respond to significant challenges including pastoral shortages, congregational transition, leadership development and new ministry opportunities.

SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS

Pastoral Oversight

One of the key aspects of being your bishop is to provide pastoral oversight, which includes care, guidance and encouragement. It is important to remember that in a Lutheran context that each congregation and ministry of the church pastoral oversight is an important and essential aspect of ministry. Historically this has been a local pastor and where no pastor is available this reverts to me as the bishop, which at times can be challenging. So, I am very grateful for every congregation and ministry leader who works with me to ensure ministry is occurring well in their context. As a District it will be important for us to continue to explore how we can provide appropriate pastoral oversight for our congregations, various boards and ministries.

New Pastors and Ministry Leaders

Ordination and installation of Pastor Bruce Flanagan (Good Shepherd Sutherland and Living Waters Liverpool Lutheran Churches) as Specific Ministry Pastor

Ordination and installation of Pastor Jacob Traeger (Immanuel Woden Lutheran Church and Molonglo Valley Gospel Community)

Ministry Formation

The District continues supporting a growing cohort of ministry leaders, providing them with opportunities to grow through formal study and practically in their local ministry context. The following people are undertaking formal formation in our District:

- Zak Huggett-Wright (SMP candidate Tuggeranong, relief work Griffith/Leeton, Central West)
- Peter Reed (accepted as a SMP Candidate Jindera Church Plant and wider Burrumbuttock Parish)

- Wilkinson Hu (Chinese Ministry – Sydney City)
- Danny Brock (Church Planter – now Village Church St Marys – previously LifeWay Westside)
- Alison Short (accepted as an SMP candidate)
- Brant Waterson (SMP candidate Orange, Dubbo-Gilgandra)

It is important for us to be constantly praying for God to help us identify, encourage, equip and support people into pastoral and ministry roles. Please pray about this regularly in your congregations

SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS AND MINISTRIES— TRANSITIONS – ALTERNATIVE MODELS

Life in the church and community continues to change, and whilst God's love for us never changes, how we receive and share that love may need to adapt

One area which is of important change is we have a continual growing list of congregations who are currently vacant and we are looking at ways of supporting them. The current vacancies are

- Tamworth
- Dubbo/Gilgandra
- Campbelltown
- Tuggeranong
- Leeton/Griffith
- Central West Parish – Parkes, Forbes and Orange
- Central Coast - Gosford
- Burrumbuttock Parish – Burrumbuttock, Jindera, Gerogery and Bethel)
- Finnish Sydney (awaiting visa for Pastor Remo Ronkainen)
- St Pauls Sydney / Redeemer Narrabeena (awaiting visa for Pastor Munye Mtata)

We are currently exploring Regional Ministry Partnerships with Tamworth, Dubbo/Gilgandra, Central West, Leeton Griffith, Southern Riverina congregations. This will involve congregations working together with an equipping and overseeing pastor, not as a parish, but as a hub. Ian Rentsch has undertaken a considerable amount of work in this area with Central West, Dubbo Gilgandra and Tamworth, and prayerfully we will have some progress by the end of the year.

Early this year I commenced the process with the Southern Riverina congregations on how they can better work together (over 130 people attended worship and 70 participated in the workshop.)

I am also encouraged by the initiative taken by the congregations in Canberra whose leaders and pastors are regularly meeting together, considering how better to work together now and also think about what it means to be God's presence in the Canberra region through Lutheran communities.

Warrambui continues to be an important ministry for our District – it is both a mission and business organisation. Many people come to Warrambui who have no other connection to the Lutheran Church, and it provides us an opportunity to be a witness. I am very thankful for the many people who serve on the Board, staff members, and volunteers who contribute to the life of Warrambui. With TPM youth and children camps ceasing in 2024, as a church we are using Warrambui less. As an entity of the District we have continued to support Warrambui in prayer, supporting their Board and Interns and financially supporting Warrambui with Cash Flow support and loan for the Dome. Coming out of COVID Warrambui Board and Management are working towards being sustainable. This is critical, as it is unlikely the District can continue to support Warrambui financially at the level we are. My concern is that as we address matters we work together well, making prayerful and informed decisions so that God's ministry continues in our District. The District Church Council has put in place a team to ensure that the Warrambui team and DCC work well together on the sustainability of Warrambui.

An important aspect of my role and any pastor's role is to be physically present with you, so I am attempting to visit your congregations and ministries as much as possible in person, and at times online, to encourage, support, minister to and guide. If you ever feel your congregation would like or needs a visit, please contact me. Please accept my apologies if you believe I have let you down and please contact me so I can work with you on how we can serve each other better.

Licensing for Word and Sacrament

Licensing for Word and Sacrament has remained vital for our congregations and pastors in NSWACT. It is enabling us to provide consistent word and sacrament ministry in many areas and also helping our pastors be able to function in a healthier way.

At present around 55 people have agreed to serve as Licensed Word and Sacrament personnel in congregational and ministry settings. They have been supported by regular workshops run by Frontier School of Mission – Licenced for Sacrament workshops in 2025, Lay reading and Licenced for Word workshops in 2026, we intend to run these workshops, plus a workshop for Pastoral Care and visiting. We are also encouraging people who are Licenced for Word to undertake the preaching unit through ALC. The current process for being Licenced is that the congregation discusses their situation with myself; if deemed appropriate, the congregation identifies a person and requests that Bishop approve the person to be licenced for Word and/or Sacrament for a period of 12 months; the Bishop will meet with the person and the person agrees to undertake appropriate training.

Licensing for Word and Sacrament will be changing in the future, most likely moving towards an Ordained Deacon for Word and Sacrament which will become standard across the LCA NZ. There are some finer details to work through regarding this move, and one of my concerns is to ensure that it can work in our context so people, communities and congregations continued to be served with the Gospel.

PLANTING AND RENEWING CONGREGATIONS

Jindera Church Plant

The Jindera Church Plant based at the St Johns Jindera School and supported by the District, St Lukes Albury as the sending church and Pastor John Borchert (Walla Walla) as mentor pastor (previously Pastor Will Frost) continues to develop under the leadership of Peter Reed. The church plant has seen more families engaging with the ministry of the church from the school community, congregation members more active in

an outreach ministry and closer relationship between the school and the church community. A blessing was with the support of the Burrumbuttock parish Peter Reed is now a Specific Ministry Pastor candidate.

Molonglo Valley Gospel Community

Jacob Traeger continues to lead a growing church plant in the Canberra region. They are supported by the District, Immanuel Woden, and Pastor Tim Muller as mentor pastor. It is a blessing to see Jacob Traeger ordained as a Specific Ministry Pastor, their worship attendance and giving growing and hearing the stories of reaching new people from the community

Westside Village Church – previously LifeWay Westside

Danny Brock continues to lead Westside Village church which is now located at Glenmore Park and worships at St Pauls St Marys. In July this year the oversight of the church transitioned from LifeWay to St Pauls St Marys and Pastor Mark Simpfendorfer. Funding for the church plant from the District will end in December 2026, and we are currently working towards how the church plant will continue.

Jalal Evangelical Lutheran Church

Whilst not a new church, they are a new church community to the Lutheran Church of Australia NSWACT District. Pastor Boaz Gill leads the congregation, and he is in the process of being ordained as a LCA Pastor. They are worshipping community that serves people from Pakistan and India, in Urdu, Hindi, Punjab and English languages. Currently they are worshipping at Good Shepherd Lutheran Campbelltown church and I am thankful for the support that this congregation is giving them. They were approved as a member congregation in July 2026, and I look forward to formally welcoming them as a congregation of our District at this synod.

COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

Communications Growth

An important aspect of connecting to people and people connecting with us to ensure our communications are engaging. I encourage every

congregation and ministry of our church to constantly check that the information is up to date, clear and engaging on:

- Noticeboards
- Websites
- Social media – e.g. Facebook
- Newsletters
- PowerPoints

Consider them from other people's point of view, new people, visitors, older people, younger people, etc.

We are blessed by having Nikki Spaans serve in our District one day a week to assist us and our congregations with more effective communication.

Being Relational - Networking and Learning

An important aspect for us as church is to be regularly meeting with each other. In congregation settings; fellowship time, coffee with others, meals together and making time for others are important to develop and nurture relationships.

At a District level we provide the following opportunities:

- **Mission and Ministry Conferences** -for pastors, lay workers and leaders of congregations. When needed pastor conference matters and lay worker conference matters are dealt with at these conferences.
- **Monthly Pastors and Church workers lunchtime gathering** – new for our District to support pastors and church workers
- **Sisterhood** – annual retreat and conference for women
- **Better Blokes** – annual retreat and conference for men

- **Young Adults Camp** – Warrambui supported
- **Prayer Gatherings** – District in person, online and regionally – see Darren Kupke for more information

Also, we have continued the relationship with New Zealand with me providing episcopal oversight for New Zealand. This usually involves 2 fortnightly trips to New Zealand and 2 monthly online meetings, plus some pastoral care via Teams, phone and email.

Leadership and Leadership Teams

Being Bishop is both a daunting, challenging and rewarding role, but it is not something I do alone and it is not my church, but God's church which you are part of. After commencing as a Bishop a visiting pastor shared with me the following prayer from Luther, which is something I am praying regularly:

Lord God, You have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in Your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked Your help, I could have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon You: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon Your Word. Use me as Your instrument — but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all. Amen

The other beauty I have in being a Bishop is the opportunity to serve with others including:

- Office Staff – Kaye, Russell and now Stephen are critical and very supportive

- DCC - Our District Church Council
- Assistant Bishop John Borchert
- Mission and Ministry Team
- Regional Pastors – Tim Muller, David Cherry, Darren Kupke, Mat von Stanke
- Ian Rentsch (Strategic Directions Facilitator)
- Michael Dobie (incoming Mission Strategic Facilitator Implementor)
- Every Pastor and church worker
- College of Bishops (Church wide and other Districts)
- Congregational and ministry leaders
- Local congregational members

Thank you for who you are, what you do and how God is using you so others may know Him and His saving love

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27

Conclusion

Thank you to everyone who is part of our District.

Thank you especially to my wife Veronica who without her support this role would be very difficult....and to my children, Mercedes, Zackary and Brooke who often catch up with her when I am away.

Let's keep relying on God, praying to Him, worshipping Him, receiving from Him, and listening to Him with each other...and then taking him to wherever we go...so others may know His love and grace in all circumstances of life.

As we go about our lives, lets make disciples of all nations.

Pastor Richard Schwedes,
Bishop, NSW and ACT District

Mission and Ministry Team

The purpose of the Mission and Ministry Team is to:

1. Assess grant applications (District and church wide applications made by NSWACT congregations and ministries) from a ministry and mission perspective, making recommendations to DCC. For details on how to apply for grants contact Bishop Richard.
2. Support the church in understanding new and potential

mission opportunities, approaches, trends, and resources.

3. Be aware of the health of our congregations and ministries, share relevant information with DCC and support congregations to become healthy Gospel receiving and sharing communities.

We usually meet around 2-3 weeks before DCC.

The Mission and Ministry team is an advisory team appointed by the bishop which at present includes Bishop Richard Schwedes, Assistant Bishop John Borchert, and Strategic Directions Facilitator Ian Rentsch.

In the next synodical term, we will be looking to recruit two more members who have experience in sustainable church mission.

Bishop Richard Schwedes

Strategic Directions Facilitators



Pr Ian Rentsch

In 2019, the NSW/ACT District of the Lutheran Church committed to a long-term direction in Walking Together in Mission. The purpose of Walking Together in Mission is to deepen understanding of what it means to be church today in the NSW and ACT District.

The priorities of Walking Together in Mission are to:

- Support congregations and ministries in mission and ministry
- Support congregations and ministries that may be in transition
- Develop alternative models of ministry that best serve the District
- Plant and renew congregations
- Develop networks and links between congregations and ministries

The role of the Strategic Directions Facilitator is to assist the NSW/ACT District in meeting these priorities.

I began this role in earnest in the middle of 2023. This is now my final report to the NSW and ACT District Synod, as Michael Dobie now succeeds me.

During my time in the role, I have worked with congregations to help them discern their vision for their particular mission and ministry, agree on common objectives, and plan how to achieve them. I used a Search Conference process to help congregations understand where God might be leading them in their localities. This involved understanding where their history, assessing their current situation, discerning the future they believe God might have in store for them as faithful disciples, and planning how to reach that vision.

Vision Statements that have been generated include:

- **Burrumbuttock Parish:** *With our eyes fixed on Jesus and the Holy Spirit moving us, we go into each day to bless our community and each other.*
- **Canberra Lutheran Leaders:** *That as Canberra (region) Lutherans, we support and encourage one another to be vibrant and cooperative communities where people encounter the risen Jesus, living Lord.*
- **Holy Cross Belconnen:** *Sharing Jesus Christ so all may celebrate life in Him*
- **Narraweena:** *Redeemer Lutheran Church, Narraweena, will be a community that welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with Jesus and trust his unconditional love*
- **Temora/Trungley Hall:** *Growing in God's grace and reaching out to bless our community with his love*
- **Walla Walla/Alma Park:** *Growing together in love and service to each other and the wider community, intersecting faith and real life with the heart of Jesus*

The challenge for these and other congregations and parishes is to implement their plans and actions. Bringing the whole congregation into the picture, praying, reviewing at each church council meeting, and setting new actions every few months is hard work. The District needs to find a way to support and mentor these groups as they traverse this road of discipleship. Michael Dobie, with his expertise in mentoring and coaching, will be very helpful, but it may take a cohort of volunteers trained in mentoring to support this work.

Aside from facilitation, I have also written four papers:

- Alternative Models of Ministry that best suit the NSW/ACT District.

- Church consultancy
- Conflict management in congregations
- Closing a Congregation

With Bishop Richard's permission, I can make them available if anyone wishes to read them.

I thank God that I have been able to serve in this role at the end of my career, and I pray that Michael also finds blessing in this important work of growing a missional mindset in the District.

Pr Ian Rentsch

Strategic Directions Facilitator: The Future



Michael Dobie

communities.

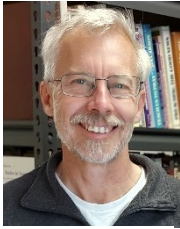
After only a few months in the role, I have been encouraged by conversations with many people across the District who share a missional mindset and long for more people in their communities to know Jesus.

I would summarise the next stage of Walking Together in Mission as "equipping the saints". My prayer is that we are ready for what God has planned next, trusting that He goes before us and walks with us in His mission.

I look forward to helping turn vision statements into implementation plans, and to identifying the resources and training leaders and disciples need as we continue this journey together.

Michael Dobie

Frontier School of Mission



Dr Mark Worthing

Much has changed in our church since our last district synod. The work of FSM has been adapted to reflect these changing needs and situations. At our last synod FSM was still largely focused on offering of academically accredited training through a partnership with Melbourne School of Theology. Many of those undertaking training were looking toward service as SMPs or Church planters. Those undertaking this level of training have been transitioned into ALC, which now offers courses of instruction entirely online.

FSM has shifted its focus to more shorter training units with a focus on training and supporting the many lay leaders who serve our congregations and other ministries through proclamation (including lay reading and lay preaching), sacramental ministry (leading communion, assisting with communion and doing

home communions), and pastoral care and visitation ministries.

While week-long intensives are still offered, including two on site at Port Macquarie and two for the internship programme at Warrambui, day long sessions (usually a Saturday) have been a focus of the work of FSM for the past two years. These offerings have been spread throughout the regions, with major units being offered once each in the Riverina, ACT, Sydney region, and Central West. In 2025 the main offering was a one-day training session on Sacramental ministry. In 2026 we are offering a one-day training session on lay reading and lay preaching. The units have been well attended with most sessions having about 20 participants from a variety of congregations in the region. In 2027 the focus of these training days will be pastoral care and visitation. In this way a wide range of our lay leaders from across the district are able to be better equipped and encouraged for the work they are doing in their local settings. In all training we seek to keep in mind a mission focus.

FSM also continues to support the Warrambui Internship programme with the offering of four week-long units, two in Bible and Theology (offered at Port Macquarie and open to the wider district) and two units focused on writing and communications skills held at Warrambui for the internship students.

FSM also organises special sessions with congregations and regions as requested, and continues to provide mission focused resources through the on-going Mission-Edge tract project, with over 20 tracts now completed and available. We are also working toward the publication, in partnership with ACR, of two new books, one on Reading the Bible, and another on Luther and Mission. We hope that these will be available by the end of the year.

Dr Mark Worthing
Dean, Frontier School of Mission



Communications



Nikki Spaans

Communication is a vital part of being human and the way we communicate has evolved so quickly in the last few years. There has been a big shift to more digital forms of communication in the years since Covid lockdowns, which now seem so far in the past.

I started as District Communications officer in March 2025 taking over from Tanya Cunningham who did a wonderful job. Since then, I have begun taking over website access across the district. There were quite a few out of date, some with issues and some that had just been gathering a bit of dust. This alone has opened a lot of communication points between myself and the wider district. I reach

out to gather information and it builds that connection between the district and congregations, this has led to a few people reaching out for advice or sharing news which has been terrific.

During the last year both the NSW ACT District website and the Frontier School of Mission website have also been updated. Frontier's website was one of the major revamps with the front page especially getting a lot of attention. There is still room to grow especially as the web is a constantly evolving space. Dr Steen Olsen, Pastor Emeriti, also ran an online course where we trialled a few things to make it more accessible for people both around Australia and overseas, including a student page with all resources and recordings for the course. The feedback received from that was positive and I hope that it

opens more doors for online learning through Frontier in the future.

Many people find online learning more accessible especially around work and life commitments so online learning can be a wonderful way to help more people share in the courses offered by Frontier.

Since February 2026 I have been publishing a monthly District eNews with a devotion and news from around our district to share the good news with everyone. This is not meant to replace our current quarterly Contact, in fact we have found for the March and June Contacts it has been a good tandem effort. It has allowed congregations to advertise things on shorter notice and given extra room for stories if the space in Contact is limited. At the time of writing we have 87 subscribers and several people

read it when shared to our district Facebook each month. Each issue has led to more subscribers as well. We have even had a few signups from the wider LCA outside of our district.

In May at both Mission and Ministry and Lutheran Women NSW & ACT Annual Convention I discussed the eNews which led to both submissions and more subscribers and the hope that information can be easily shared across the district, especially while Lutheran Women is in recess.

The district Facebook page has been a great resource for connecting with the wider community. Over the last year we've seen remarkable growth in followers as well as interactions and reach. Social media is slowly becoming more of a "front door" to churches than their websites. Having social media that is at least somewhat current can often be the difference between someone coming to a congregation or believing the congregation doesn't exist anymore

and going somewhere else. A few congregations have asked me to help with keeping their Facebook pages updated, while providing photos and events for me to add, or just having me share district news so they stay current.

Since starting and getting to know many congregations it has also opened the way for conversations that may not have happened. I sometimes get requests for advice for technology options or different ways to do things, such as how to livestream another church's service while in vacancy or what programs might be good for scheduling and service orders. This has often been the best way to have a conversation with congregations that I may not interact with regularly and has led to sharing of stories and building a relationship with more congregations and people I may not normally meet!

Since starting as Communications Officer I have also been able to attend a few special events, which I have

been very excited to be a part of, whether it was just to take photos to share across digital platforms or Contact/eNews or participate in discussions and strategic planning workshops. Recently I was able to attend the Warrambui Strategic Workshop which was a wonderful opportunity to share not only insight into Communications and web presence but an excellent sharing of ideas and brainstorming for the future of Warrambui.

I am hopeful that over the coming months and years that the District can continue to grow in Mission while opening new avenues of communication not only within the NSW & ACT District but also with the LCA NZ as a whole.

Faithfully Submitted,

Nikki Spaans,
Communications Officer

District Prayer Team

Prayer is important, because it reminds us it is not about us. Without prayer we might think our church/district will be successful because of our hard work, or the strategies that we employ.

But before the apostles were to go into the world, Jesus said, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:4,8, NIV)

The power of the church comes from Holy Spirit – and Holy Spirit often comes anew and afresh when we take time out of our work to read God's word and wait on Him. In this time we are often refreshed, renewed, strengthened, inspired, and encouraged.

Thom Rainer surveyed many congregations that nearly died and then were revitalised. He writes, "I

have yet to see a sustained church revitalization that was not undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer. ... We have seen churches turn around for a brief season with a new methodology or a new emphasis. We have seen some churches reverse their negative trends briefly with a new pastor or dynamic staff member. But we have yet to see a sustained church revitalization that was not undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer." (Thom S. Rainer *Anatomy of a Revived Church* p.59)

We want our District to be healthy, growing and revitalised by Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are trying to cultivate a powerful movement of prayer in our District. There are four ways we have been doing this:

1. The team provides prayer points to congregations and intercessors each month relating to our District Prayer Calendar.
2. Since September 2025, we have hosted prayer meetings online

each month for mutual encouragement and group prayer (usually first Tuesday of the month).

3. Our District Intercessors share prayers points and updates via email and WhatsApp.
4. We hold face to face gatherings. These gatherings included a weekend retreat at Warrambui (August 2024), and encouraging intercessors to attend the Mission and Ministry Conference on discernment (October 2025). In February 2026 people met on a Saturday morning as a group in their regions, and then linked up online. (Stay tuned for a repeat of this later in the year!)

Thank you all for your input and prayers for our District. By the power of Holy Spirit, may we be a healthy, growing, revitalised arm of God's Church as we join God in his mission.

Pastor Darren Kupke – for the
District Prayer Team

Congregations and Parishes – Canberra Region

Holy Cross, Belconnen

In the north of Canberra sits Holy Cross, a wonderfully diverse, progressive congregation constantly seeking to share the joy of God's grace to people, whatever their life's journey. We reflect some of that diversity, but remain aware that we need to constantly experience that grace for ourselves, if we are to connect with those not necessarily looking or thinking like us.

We have experienced joy in healthy worshipping numbers and connections through fellowship activities and have heard encouraging stories about blessings our livestreamed service brings. We continue to struggle with going deeper in discipleship with some of those connections.

This synodical term has seen renewal of children's, confirmation and young adult ministries, although the challenge remains in encouraging ongoing connection amongst our youth and in developing new leadership.

Our people celebrated the long-sought Synodical decision allowing more formal reception of the ministry of women in our leadership and worship life. We remain engaged with LCA NZ around LWF membership.

Our facilities continue to bless the community, being available to a variety of community groups (Disability services, Playgroup, Choir, Art class, other Churches). It is great to not have the building sitting empty through the week and has been a blessing with the demise of carpark income since COVID, however our Deacons are challenged to review usage to ensure that it meets our congregational needs also. We have recently improved our oven amenities, installed solar panels, and are grateful to the District for assistance with manse renovations.

We walk together in mission in supporting a sister congregation with music ministry, encouraging several members (and Pastor) in supporting the District, Warrambui and broader LCA NZ in board & volunteer capacities, a point of "Godly pride" for

our small congregation. And we are blessed by the occasional presence, ministry and mutual support of the Warrambui interns.

In 2027 we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Holy Cross with several events and products, and we pray that, should God see fit for us to continue to gather for another 50 years, we will play a part in serving the needs of our Belconnen community and be used by the Holy Spirit to bring people to a living and exciting awareness of God's grace in Jesus... in line with our motto – *"Sharing Jesus Christ so all may celebrate life in Him!"*

Pr Darren Jaensch

Canberra Finnish

Not much has changed after the last district synod. The Holy Trinity Canberra Finnish Church has been serving mainly Finnish emigrants from the 1950's and 60's, almost 50 years ago now. At it's best there were more than 2000 Finnish background people in Canberra, today perhaps about 500-600. These people belong in 'different groups of Finnish understanding'. We have at least some kind of connection to most of them.

During these decades we have had local church goers who have had a connection to people with Finnish background as well among us. Now we face the question about people's ageing. Our people are overwhelmingly older parishioners, many of them now more than 80 years of age. Thankfully we have had less funerals in the past few years.

Descendants of original emigrants, the next generations, are not used to going to church. The younger generation doesn't go to church in Finland either. Of course, in these circumstances, we are asking: Where are we going from this point? How long can we go on with a small, mainly ethnic congregation, where the council members and other main responsibility bearers are ageing as well? On the other hand, we have several new, younger council members during last couple of years.

Before COVID we had our regular Sunday services with 15-20 attendants every Sunday. Perhaps now during the last few years or so our average has gone up to bit more than 20. Not big in numbers, but a bit bigger percentage. Special events have been more popular. Around the same number of attendees have taken part in groups which have meetings every Thursday. In a prayer group every second Thursday we have almost ten people coming together to pray. During the last years we have had very good co-operation with all the Finnish groups in Canberra - Finnish Pentecostals, Finnish School, Finnish Society, Finnish Embassy.

Pr Janne Pekkarinen

St Peter's Memorial, Canberra

St. Peter's congregation in the heart of Canberra is an aging congregation. The church building was dedicated 65 years ago. It was God's grace first and foremost and the faith and commitment, and hard work of the members, mostly migrants from Germany, Latvia and Estonia, which shaped the life and history of the congregation. Many generations can call it their spiritual home. By faithful pastors they were fed with the Word of God and with the life-giving Sacraments. The congregation has an unbroken witness of Christ in the heart of the Civic. Although the membership is ageing, some new families join us, however, they can't compensate for the loss in numbers due to illness and death. In the past few years we had one adult baptism and confirmation which really animated the congregation. Baptisms are not as frequent as they used to be. The congregation is slowly fading away. Despite of their advanced age they are committed to support the church life of St. Peter's as well as the work of the LCA NZ in general. They are still reaching out to the wider community by organizing the occasional concerts in the church and reaching out to the sick. We take active part in the ACT Ecumenical network in organizing ecumenical Prayer Services and the annual Parliamentary Opening Service. The

Pastor is a member of the ACT Churches' Council in the past sixteen years representing the Lutheran Church of Australia and the NSW District.

It is a matter of fact that we live in an indifferent and often hostile environment regarding the Christian faith and religion. The question is whether we have the strength to withstand the pressure and not give in to conformity and the spirit of this secularized society in the present ideological climate. The split within the LCA NZ had an adverse effect to the unity of the Lutheran church in this country. In spite of this sad outcome, St. Peter's congregation will remain committed to God's work in the parish, and the desire of our members is to grow deeper in the love of Christ remains unbroken. St. Peter's approach is that the Christian faith and the "success" of the church/congregation is not measured by numbers alone but by the solid commitment to the Way of our Lord and faithful witnessing to the Gospel in their lives. Our sheer physical presence in the Civic can be a sign which says that salvation is a gift, it is not earned. It is by grace, through faith. With this spirit and commitment, and with trust in God's providence we look forward to the challenges that might come our way in the years to come.

Pr Gábor Szabó

St John the Baptist, Queanbeyan

The membership of St. John the Baptist Lutheran Church in Queanbeyan, NSW is well below critical mass for decades now. It is quite obvious that without St. Peter's in Canberra, St. John's wouldn't have been able to survive as an independent congregation. Until mid-2023 there were regular weekly Sunday Worship Services. Worship Services since have reduced to two per month. The Ladies' Guild disbanded itself years ago, and young people eventually moved on and left Queanbeyan to pursue their careers elsewhere in Australia. There is a young family with two small children who attend Sunday Worship Services more or less regularly. There are also a handful of visitors that attend on a more or less regular

basis. The only community activity which remained is the organizing of the Samaritan boxes, which is still going very successfully.

Pr Gábor Szabó

Trinity Cooma

Cooma are a small community of 10, we continue to meet simply around Word and Sacrament on 3 Sundays a month. We have made some changes in the way we meet, have rearranged our seating into a semicircle at the front and I sit down for an informal and interactive address rather than a sermon. We share Holy Communion each time we meet - slowly and without rush which one can do in a small group.

Since retiring from teaching, my wife Ruth started a women's Bible Study, with now just 3 since one lady retired to Sydney. This little group is exploring a lot of good questions on understanding our faith and practice.

My being injured in a road accident early 2025 has been a catalyst for some change. Our location is such that we need to make decisions for our own destiny. Ruth has been participating in training and installed for Word and Sacrament ministry, is gaining confidence and serves our little group when I am not available.

It is 17 years since I stepped into the SMP role as a volunteer Pastor with my small business supporting my work. It is not an ideal mix with time constraints, and there is no such thing as a day to prepare a sermon. However a church that was on the verge of closing remains alive. People have found their way back to church – simply because we are here. Some have reconnected beautifully in their older years and been cared for in their dying. Older members have been supported in the closing years of their lives which would not have happened if we were not here. Visitors have been blessed sharing with us and some have found the Gospel in a very special way. The work of the church continues in its own small way in Cooma, and we continue a Lutheran witness in our local community. This has worked because the group have their own pastor.

Pr Melvin Salzke

Good Shepherd Tuggeranong

Though we are a small congregation, we continue to meet regularly for Worship and other activities and work with the wider community.

Blessings are that we have faithful committed members, who assist with worship leading and ministry matters and we have many opportunities to be Jesus' hands and feet within the community such as - free Bread Night; Community Garden; Cuppa & Craft; Food Pantry; Shed Night and Dinner Church. All these activities allow us to build relationships, show care to the wider community and for people to get to know each other and have opportunity to join in our Worship Services, Bible Studies and faith talks.

We are blessed to have Zak Huggett-Wright as our Ministry Intern. He is busy studying, leading two Worship Services a month at Good Shepherd and the other two Sundays he leads Services at Leeton/Griffith and Central west parishes as well as doing Dinner church every Thursday night.

Every Thursday morning, Cheryl Turek, our Community Development Co-ordinator, along with members of our congregation, in conjunction with a retired Anglican pastor hold a service at Greenway Views Senior Living Retirement village.

Cheryl in her role continues to build relationships with the community. Often people pop in for a chat, prayer, someone to listen to them or food from our food cupboard, or frozen meals from our freezer.

Cheryl, Zak and myself meet monthly with the Canberra District Pastors and leaders for encouragement, prayer and discuss many items and how we can help each other. For example Belconnen congregation music ministry visits us once a month to play music at our Sunday services.

From the above you can see we have many opportunities to connect with our community but we are getting very tired and starting to age. We currently have no Pastor and we have no children in regular attendance. However our congregation is well supported by Cheryl, Zak and our Office Manager Sarah who works 8

hours per week plus we have many capable members who step up as needed.

Our prayer is that God brings to us the people we need and the people who need us. We thank God for our Church community which He has placed here in the ACT.

Sharon Stephan, Chairperson

Immanuel Woden Valley

Immanuel continues to be blessed by having two worship services on Sundays, at 9am and 10.30am, with a morning tea in between, giving opportunity for worshippers to mingle and greet people new or newer to our fellowship. Both services are livestreamed. There are a lot of lay people involved in leading the worship. For the bible readings and sermons we use the lectionary for some of the year, and also have series; like currently working through the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. We used Lectio 365 resources on the disciplines of Lent with the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Each August we have sermons about the women of the Bible, and Seasons of Creation in September.

Once a quarter we have what we call our Oikos (Greek for household) combined worship which also includes the people of our church plant – the Molonglo Valley Gospel Community (MVGC). We celebrate together what God has been doing in our midst; we welcome and farewell people, and have a fellowship lunch. For the first time MVGC will host the Oikos Service in their worship space in September.

Jacob Traeger, pastor of MVGC, was ordained at Immanuel on 30 November, 2026. He is currently working with Immanuel to help us with visioning for God's mission for the next 10 years.

We rejoice with 4 confirmands who have been learning and growing this past year, assisted by mentors. We continue to have a range of Bible study small groups. We have a small group coordinator, as well as a pastoral care coordinator. During winter, we have 'invite yourself to dinner' events where some offer a meal at their home, and then people can sign up to come.

Each year Immanuel and MVGC have a weekend camp at Warrambui in May. This year there were 80 attending, including day visitors. So much good bonding happens through the camp. A generous bequest blesses the camp ministry especially for those going for their first time.

Immanuel has for many years hosted a Samoan congregation that worships on Sunday afternoons. A Nepalese Pentecostal Church now worships in our hall every Saturday. We are getting more connected with them, like with their assisting us in our annual Christmas celebration in the park by the local Lyons shops. Last year we had over 200 people attending, with about 100 from the local community. We also again plan for our springtime Floriade Garden to be a connecting place with our neighbours.

Last year our church kitchen was remodelled and is now much more functional for the groups that use our hall, and for us. We now use the EasyPark App for people who pay to use our car park during the week, blessing our income, though our parking since Covid is far from full. We have been prayerful and financial supporters for Nomin from Mongolia who recently graduated from the Lutheran Seminary in the Philippines.

Our congregation rejoices with the LCA NZ Way Forward decision to bless our church body with women pastors along with men, and to encourage the ministry of women in every part of the church.

As the regional pastor leader, I report that pastors and lay leaders of the Canberra area and Cooma meet each month and then have lunch together. Twice a year we meet for most of the day to plan and review our ministry together. This year we had combined Lenten services on Wednesday evenings, moving around our churches each week. We are planning to have a combined website for information about our various churches.

Pr Tim Muller

Molonglo Valley

The Molonglo Valley Gospel Community gathers weekly in a community centre in Denman

Prospect. Our gatherings don't look the same each week, but we do regularly sing, pray, and share the sacraments, as well as having discussions, and acting out bible passages.

We've experienced God adding to our number and been blessed to be joined by local Christians new to the neighbourhood who have brought enthusiasm and energy to us. The church has formed a leadership team who pray together, check in on the health of our community, and lead discernment on what God is calling us to next.

We've been delighted to have opportunities to connect people with Jesus, including running immersive Experience Easter events in 2024 and 2025, where we've taken over a local park to give people ways to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell the Easter story. With a large population of migrants from south Asia, we've shared the events of Easter with many who hadn't heard it before. We've walked together in mission with other Canberra Lutherans and the Warrambui interns to help these events happen.

The church continues to run events to bless the community, such as kite flying, board games afternoons, and curry and trivia nights. We've had not-yet-Christians join us at events and on Sundays, and ran a New Life, New Love introduction to Christianity earlier this year.

As we seek to bless the community, share faith and grow as disciples (as well as worshipping together), our main challenge continues to be that although we are growing, we are still small in number. The harvest is many, but the workers are few. Please pray that the Lord will send more workers into his harvest field, that he will continue to grow connections with those who don't yet believe and draw people to faith, and that more families with primary school aged kids will connect with the church.

We're looking forward to seeing what God will do amongst us in the coming years. We appreciate your prayers, and if you're ever in Canberra on a Sunday, we'd love you to join our gatherings – details are at molonglochurch.com.au

Pr Jacob Traeger

Congregations and Parishes – Coastal Regions

Good Shepherd, Campbelltown

Our congregation continues to come together to worship the Living God week by week, even though our number remain small.

We have been blessed by the willingness of each of our members to exercise their talents and gifts for the benefit of the whole congregation. And for this we are thankful to our God. He is indeed a God who blesses us in ways that will build His church.

We give thanks for those who:

- co-ordinate worship services
- deliver messages
- present lay readings
- read the Scriptures
- pray on our behalf
- lead the service musically.

Not only this, but our members regularly meet together to build fellowship and to encourage each other in their faith.

In the past several months congregation of the Jalal Fellowship, under the leadership of Rev. Boaz Gill, has begun worshipping at Good Shepherd. Their participation has been welcomed, from time to time, in the English language service, just as our participation in the Urdu language service is welcomed.

Pastor Gill is currently taking steps to reorient towards Lutheranism, and we expect our developing relationship to grow closer over the coming months.

We can look to the future being fully convinced that our God will keep all His promises and will continue to bless us as we continue to grow in grace.

John Hows, Chairman

St Matthews Central Coast

In the last two years the congregation has been led through major changes to its structure. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Estonian congregation lapsed and was not renewed. In December 2025 a farewell service for Pastor Allan Taruste was arranged. Pastor Allan conducted the service which was followed by a congregational lunch.

The congregation has remained united around a central core of members continuing with Lay-Reading services whilst we are in this transition period. The Church Committee is continuing to discuss solutions and with continuing support of Bishop Richard and the District Office, strategies for the calling of a Pastor are being developed for presentation to the congregation.

As the congregation is made up of mature people, the main priority is for the ongoing wellbeing of members. Some of ladies of the congregation meet once a month on an informal basis to have bible study, morning tea and to generally care for each other. From this group, some other initiatives have been undertaken. Successful art workshop mornings, for wannabe Picassos, have been arranged, delighting all participants. This group was approached to organise a *Coastal Zone Fellowship Day*. The day was successfully planned and undertaken instilling confidence into the group. Planning is well underway for the production, “*Ecclesiastes*” by Neil Modra to be presented in our church. Several of our members, licensed for Sacrament, provide Home Communion to members who are unable to attend regular church services. These visits provide a necessary Christian contact for these homebound persons.

The congregation is connected to outside organisations such as *Mary Mac’s Place* which is a Roman Catholic group that supports people in need on the Central Coast. Hampers of donated goods are regularly sent to this group for distribution. All produce presented at our Harvest Thanksgiving services was forwarded to this group for which they were most thankful. Some of our members give their time in supporting the YouthLife charitable initiative that is supported by the Christian Community on the Central Coast. Our congregation’s volunteers, facilitate running the YouthLife bargain shop and associated storage warehouse, providing a valuable service to the community. The proceeds from the shop are used to employ dynamic

Christian teachers to support students in Central Coast schools. Our members have attended the World Day of Prayer Services. The congregation is actively discussing whether we should host this event at a future date.

The congregation has regularly enjoyed informal lunches after service fostering a sense of community among members and associates. From an informal invitation from Redeemer Lutheran Church Narraweena, a lunch at Palm Beach was arranged. A pleasurable afternoon was spent getting to know some of our Lutheran neighbours. The positive consequence from that lunch means that the planning of another one is well under way. Some of our members have participated in the special Lutheran services in our District. These services include the installation of Richard Schwedes as Bishop at Lifeway Epping Lutheran Church, the *License for Sacrament* Course, at Holy Cross Belconnen and Lifeway Epping Lutheran Church and the Multicultural Service held at St Paul’s Lutheran Church in Sydney City.

Our church facilities are also used by the Finnish and German Lutheran Communities. Services are held at different times and in the future, we are investigating collaboration with the Finnish Community so that joint services can be organised. A highlight of services each year has been the German congregation’s *Christmas Carol Night*. Many of the St Matthews’ members attend this night and the singing, in German, of the carols is a delight. We do get people attending services on Sunday morning in the process of ‘*checking us out*’. Congregation members are quite adept at enquiring into these people’s wellbeing, being friendly and genuine. This is a slow process, however if we are consistently being approachable, we believe we are undertaking the work we are placed to do.

Respectfully Submitted

St Matthews Lutheran Church
Committee

LifeWay Lutheran Church

Over the last synodical period, LifeWay has experienced several significant changes. Most notably, LifeWay's founding lead pastor, Pastor Mark Schultz, accepted a call to serve the wider LCA as Assistant to the Bishop for International Mission, and Pastor Mark Simpfendorfer accepted a call to St Paul's, St Marys and Our Saviour Springwood, within a short period of time. As a result of this change, a decision was made to make a change to the pastoral leadership structure, moving from one lead pastor to a new co-lead pastor arrangement with Pastors Nicholas (Nich) Kitchen and Mathew von Stanke receiving calls to serve under this new structure.

With this change in approach there has been a period of transition, and ongoing adjustment, while discerning what the next phase of LifeWay's ministry will look like under this new style of pastoral leadership.

Alongside this, LifeWay leadership has been discerning and prayerfully working through other significant areas of focus, including financial and ministry focus, needed to support LifeWay into the future with the purpose being that all LifeWay sites are well positioned to continue to grow, serve, and respond to the opportunities God places before us in each local community. This year we have begun a process of community consultations across all LifeWay sites and have involved a consultant group: Partners For Ministry. We have done this to help us think through the broader leadership structural changes that can be made and/or improved upon as we prepare ourselves for what the Lord has in store for us in the next season of LifeWay's ministry.

LifeWay Westside

In late 2025 and early 2026, LifeWay began exploring a new arrangement for the Western Sydney church plant and church planter Danny Brock. LifeWay has been in conversation with the NSW/ACT district and Pastor Mark Simpfendorfer to officially transfer the ongoing oversight of that ministry to the St Marys congregation, as it was identified that a more local community approach was in the best

interest of Westside and its ongoing progress. This was finalised on the 1st of July.

LifeWay Newcastle

We have been encouraged by the way God seems to be drawing together an increasingly multicultural community, and over the past 12 months we have celebrated this through a multicultural and multilingual Pentecost Sunday lunch, where everyone was invited to bring a plate of food traditional to their ethnic homeland. Let's just say we all had a wonderful time and enjoyed one of the tastiest meals any of us can remember at a church event. Alongside this multicultural development in Newcastle, God also seems to be drawing people to us from the wider Hunter Valley area. We have begun imagining what a church in that area might look like and are praying about what God may be calling us to do there. For now, we have a new Bible study group meeting on Saturdays in one family's home. LifeWay members from that area have already been inviting friends along, and many of these friends now attend the group regularly. We pray that this is the beginning of something even greater that God may want to do through us in the Hunter Valley in the future.

Local LifeWay Newcastle member Andrew Njau, has also been sponsored by LifeWay to undergo Australian Lutheran College's "Discover" program. With only one semester of study in that program remaining, Andrew – together with his wife and family, is discerning whether to continue with theological study and possibly pursue ordination. We hope and pray that whatever God calls Andrew to in the future, that his time with us at LifeWay and the equipping he has received through this training will stand him in good stead to take up whatever call God places before him.

Finally, LifeWay has committed to an upgrade of the church building and facilities which we hope will enable us to improve our ability to engage other community groups by offering our space for use to the community during the week. This is a multi-stage project but will begin with the installation of air conditioning to the worship space and the conversion of

a small multipurpose room into a dedicated office space which we will seek rent to a suitable professional such as a Christian counsellor or psychologist or another Christian ministry organisation needing office space. We hope that our church can become something of a community hub for the Broadmeadow and Hamilton areas of Newcastle.

LifeWay Epping

During the pastoral vacancy at Epping a number of lay preachers and other leaders stepped up and lead the community well. Since June 2025, Epping has been taking time to adjust and to allow Pastor Nich and his family to settle into Sydney and into the ministry of LifeWay. At the same time the continued involvement and opportunities for the lay preachers that came in the vacancy has been ongoing, which has enabled them to gain confidence but also allowed Pastor Nich, to spend time focusing on the wider LifeWay communities as a Co-lead pastor.

Epping has also had the benefit of engagement with Partners For Ministry in helping the local community to begin conversations and engagement around strengthening the local Epping congregation and working towards a clear local ministry focus moving forward.

LifeWay Asian Ministry

With the change of lead pastor at Epping, it has meant that Pastor Francis and the local Chinese language speaking people of LifeWay have been through a process of seeking understanding and clarity, as they build a relationship with Pastor Nich. They have also been exploring what the key focus for the ongoing Asian ministry beyond 2026 may look like. There have been local community conversations as well as discussions around succession planning for when Pastor Francis Leung retires. There will be ongoing conversations with LifeWay leadership as to the process and strategic planning moving forward.

LifeWay Illawarra

LifeWay has asked that Michael Dobie be considered for SMP training, with the goal being

ordination with a part-time call to the Oak Flats and Wollongong worshipping communities. Supported by both Pastors Nich and Mat, this will allow Michael to build upon his ongoing leadership in regular worship services and supporting and equipping local members of LifeWay Illawarra, ensuring the community is cared for pastorally while also strengthening the community outreach that has already been underway for some time.

Lifeway is also committed to working alongside Micheal as he takes up his new role as Mission Facilitator for the NSW/ACT District.

In February 2026 the Next Chapter second-hand book shop was launched at the LifeWay Wollongong site. This book shop has a mission/ministry focus as a place not only to sell Christian books, but to provide a place for local meeting and wider community engagement.

As we look beyond this period to the next few years, we do so with deep gratitude for the pastors, leaders, and congregations who have carried LifeWay's journey to this point, and also with great expectancy for what God will do next through us. United across our sites, committed to the structural changes required, and listening together to the Spirit's leading, we remain focused on seeing people come to life in Christ, and to be a part of the loving, sharing and growing communities in Epping, Illawarra, Newcastle, and beyond.

Pr Mat von Stanke

Living Waters Liverpool

Pastor Bruce Flanagan began serving us in November 2025, his time being shared with Sutherland congregation. During the vacancy, Pastor Terry Unger provided monthly worship services, offering continuity and pastoral care. On other Sundays, members of the church council stepped in to lead worship, preparing PowerPoint presentations and sharing sermons generously provided by LCA pastors. Our worship gatherings continue to be a source of strength. I am thankful for the many hands and hearts that have contributed to this ministry throughout the year.

Spiritual life within our congregation has remained vibrant through regular fellowship, particularly our weekly Bible study sessions. Together, we have explored the Gospel of Matthew. Under Pastor Bruce's thoughtful leadership, we have begun studying Martin Luther's Small Catechism, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. This shared study has enriched our understanding of Scripture.

The Monthly Ladies Guild meetings, led by Ros, continue to be a cherished time of teaching, singing, sharing, and fellowship. The Prayer Team also meets weekly. This ministry remains a meaningful expression of care and spiritual support within our church family.

Our German fellowship group is a cherished part of our church life. Each Sunday at 8 am, we gather in reverence and joy to worship, listen, and reflect together. These times of shared faith and thoughtful conversation continue to strengthen our bond and deepen our love for the Lord.

As a church, we look to the future with hope—not because we know what it holds, but because we trust in the One who holds the future.

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You." Isaiah 26:3

Ursula Beck, Chairperson 2025

Redeemer Narrabeena

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

God's encouragement from Isaiah 41:10 has been our focus in the past year.

In 2024 we were newly facing a pastoral vacancy, and these words offered much-needed comfort. Today, we remain without a pastor, but we are filled with hope. Pastor Munye Mtata has accepted the call to join us! While we wait patiently for his immigration visas to be finalized so he and his family can move from Canada, we thank God for His guidance and thank the Council of Bishops for their steadfast support.

Recent Ministry Highlights:

- **Community Fellowship:** We kicked off 2025 with a wonderful Australia Day outdoor barbecue. Blessed with perfect weather, 23 people gathered for plenty of delicious food and great company.
- **Men's Breakfast:** Meeting on the first Saturday of each month, this group has grown steadily. Discussions this year spanned a rich variety of topics, including the biblical role of David, Easter reflections, foot health, and coping with prostate cancer.
- **Spiritual Growth & Healing:** Bible studies and prayer meetings continued faithfully. Mark Redden led a series on the Letter to the Hebrews, while Joanna Kay and Virginia Milla anchored our Thursday Healing Services. The fellowship, chats, and food shared after these services have been vital for keeping our community connected.
- **Pulpit Supply:** We are incredibly grateful to the visiting pastors who fed us spiritually this year.

Redeemer remains in a strong and stable financial position. We carry **zero debt** and benefit from steady, reliable income via the Montessori Preschool, the lease of the manse at 46 Parr Parade, and the ongoing, generous free-will offerings of our members. Thank you for your continued financial stewardship.

We are a small but active team. A healthy congregation relies on willing hands of all. We have been blessed with many who serve in different ways.

Our attendance at Redeemer grew over the last 12 months. As we move further into the next year, we do so with a positive spirit, committed to deep prayer and trusting completely in God's direction.

Yours in Christ,
Brigitte Tietge-Rollans, Chairperson

St Peter's, Port Macquarie

The Port Macquarie congregation will have celebrated its 40th anniversary on Sunday 2 August, by the time synod meets. Former pastor and district Mission Director Brian

Schwarz and his wife Janet will be coming from Adelaide for the weekend, as well as other former members of the congregation and our bishop, Richard. While we have been saddened to lose several founding and early members of the congregation over the past year, we are pleased that two founding members will be with us for the day.

Forty years after the formation of the congregation, St Peters continues to be a small but healthy community of believers. We continue to average just over 50 in worship, and have a range of regular activities such as our weekly Bible study, a fortnightly Christian meditation group, regular women's Bible study group, monthly lunch and morning tea meetings, a weekly cycling group, and other activities.

We have been blessed with a well-maintained and versatile physical plant that includes the church building, manse and church office. This last year we extended our back veranda to accommodate more people for morning tea and special functions. Given the generally mild weather in Port Macquarie this expanded outdoor area serves a function similar to a church hall.

With several key members passing away or stepping back from active leadership roles since last synod, we have been blessed to have many of our newer members step up to take on leadership roles in the congregation.

We continue to hold a German language Christmas Eve service each year, and recently have begun hosting a congregation of Indian Orthodox Christians (Thomas Christians) once a month.

As a congregation we are thankful for the many blessings we have received and for the many new and continuing members God has given us to worship together, support and pray for one another, and to reflect the light of Christ in our community.

Pastor Mark Worthing

St Paul's St Marys and Our Saviour Springwood

Both congregations are committed and faithful groups that worship every Sunday. Due to the COVID-19

pandemic and subsequent unplanned vacancies, the churches are in a compliance catch-up phase, sorting archival records, and conducting general property clean-ups. An increase in worshipping members has also been observed, possibly due to a committed effort in visiting and pastoral care.

Both are developing new ways to connect with their local neighbours, initially through regular donations of non-perishable goods to those in need. Furthermore, both churches will participate in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) later in 2026 to help gauge and address the specific needs of their respective communities.

St Paul's St Marys has completed significant property upgrades while expanding its local ministry.

- Westside Village: The former Westside Lifeway church plant is now under the oversight of St Paul's. Both pastors have been meeting regularly, and this was a practical and natural ministry initiative.
- Anniversary: St Paul's celebrated its 70th anniversary in late 2025, with some original members still active.
- Property Upgrades: Long-awaited major foundation and drainage problems have been resolved. The carpark has also been surfaced, enabling new community events such as a BBQ and carol event.

Community Engagement & Outreach:

- Continuing to build relationships with the staff and parents of the onsite preschool.
- Teaching scripture at a local primary school
- Trialling a playgroup and investigating the possibility of operating a free bread food bank.
- Exploring amateur theatre productions and holding evangelism workshops.
- Relocating and upgrading signage for better visual presence, alongside planned new Website and Facebook pages.
- Supporting and being supported by One Church, the combined Churches of Penrith group.

Internal Updates: Replacing pews with chairs, looking into local school groups to use the facilities, and hosting a fortnightly Bible study in the home of a member.

Our Saviour Springwood has maintained strong traditions while continually enhancing its fellowship and musical worship.

- Anniversary: The congregation celebrated the 40th anniversary of the purchase of their building in late 2025. Plans are underway to document and share the church's history in both electronic and hard copy formats.
- Music and Liturgy: The church is blessed with musicians who serve every Sunday, regularly utilizing four different liturgical service orders. A recent gift of a piano will further increase the range of music offered.
- Community Connection: Following conversations with other local churches, ongoing discussions are taking place regarding how to share the church building for other community events.

Fellowship Activities: Regular events include:

- A monthly light luncheon
- A monthly fellowship study and lunch.
- Weekly lunch outings.
- A congregational meal once a term to celebrate special birthdays.

Pastor Mark Simpfendorfer

St Paul's Sydney

St Paul's Lutheran Church Sydney continues its God-mandated journey to be a place of hope, light, and refuge in the heart of Australia's largest and most multicultural city. Situated in the city centre, we enjoy both unique opportunities and distinct challenges. We embrace these as invitations to deepen our faith and remain attentive to God at work among us and through our ministry in a diverse community.

St Paul's has been in a pastoral vacancy for the past two years (as of the end of June 2026), following the appointment of our pastor of eight years, Pastor Richard Schwedes, as District Bishop.

To ensure we remain a welcoming faith community during this transition, a range of intentional measures were established:

- A small lay worship planning team, pastoral carers, and our leadership team have stepped up to maintain weekly worship and strengthen our digital presence.
- Our Mission and Ministry Facilitator, Bridgitte Willshire, completed her theological studies and assumed an expanded hybrid role. She has taken on greater leadership in weekly worship, joined the planning team, and been licensed for Word and Sacrament ministry.
- Supported by lay members and visiting pastors, this team has faithfully enabled us to continue celebrating Holy Communion weekly.

We eagerly look forward to welcoming our new pastor from Canada, Pastor Munye, who is currently awaiting the clearance of immigration visas alongside his family. During this holding period, we have actively built relationships with them by including the family regularly in our congregational prayers; facilitating meetings with the Church Council; and incorporating some of Pastor Munye's recorded sermons into our lay-led services.

It has been a profound blessing to experience his gentle, servant-hearted approach to ministry from afar.

St Paul's is deeply committed to outward-focused ministries that serve our local city neighbours. Some of these initiatives are now traditions within our congregational life:

- Oxford Street Mardi Gras: Offering a safe space, hospitality, and rest during the festival.
- Partnering with the Sister Freda Mission at St James' Church (Macquarie Street) to collect socks and gloves each winter, and deodorant and water bottles each summer for people experiencing homelessness.
- Partnering with Mission Australia last year in support of their Christmas Hamper Appeal.

We also intentionally cultivate ecumenical networks to create a shared witness to God's love across Sydney. Bridgitte and some others work closely with several Christian organizations, including World Day of Prayer Australia and the Bible Society, to strengthen these bonds.

Discovering fresh, creative ways to share a taste of God's presence remains a priority. Our fellowship groups continue, alongside new initiatives:

- Monthly Community Coffee gatherings at a local café, regular Men's Breakfasts, and ongoing Lutheran faith discussions utilising the LCA Presence series.
- The Plant Club: Launching this July in conjunction with a local business, aiming to literally "grow" deeper relationships with our immediate neighborhood.
- Dramatic Scripture Arts: Drawing on the rich talents of our members, we hosted eight live performances of the Book of Ecclesiastes as part of the Sydney Festival. More recently, during Holy Week, we presented live dramatic readings of the Gospel of John spanning from Maundy Thursday to Easter Day—bringing the reality of Jesus' death and resurrection more deeply into our hearts.

We are grateful for our small, dedicated core of long-term regular worshippers. Simultaneously, a large portion of our congregation consists of people living in Sydney on a temporary basis. Welcoming people into fellowship for months rather than years is both one of our greatest challenges and greatest joys.

Many newcomers arrive carrying complex life circumstances—including intense migration experiences, housing instability, language barriers, financial hardship, or the simple isolation of settling into a massive new city. Others arrive while exploring faith for the very first time.

During this season, we have been deeply blessed by specific testimonies of grace:

- We welcomed a couple from a Muslim background who, at

considerable personal cost, embraced the love of Jesus and found a home in our church family. Their living testimony and growing faith enrich us all.

- We continue to walk alongside our brother Ahmed, another Muslim convert, as he seeks God's will for his life and experiences the deep blessings of belonging within the St Paul's community.

We celebrate the richness of God's diverse family through our Pentecost services and our annual Multicultural Service in October. This signature event brings together diverse Lutheran communities from across Sydney for worship, fellowship, and a shared meal. Regular participants include Norwegian, Finnish, Tamil, Pakistani, Indonesian, and German congregations, and Cloud Gate, a local Chinese singing group that uses our church hall throughout the year.

We continue to spread God's Word through livestreaming and podcast ministries. We connect with viewers across Australia and overseas. For example this digital ministry allows international family members to witness baptisms or join together in grief during memorial services.

In response to long-term maintenance needs and in anticipation of Pastor Munye's arrival, we are undertaking significant renewal work across our church and manse properties.

Our Property Team has engaged a young local architectural firm to guide the renewal of our church frontage, improving street visibility and community access.

- Updated signage, a new illuminated cross, and structural enhancements.
- With recent Council Heritage Exemption Works approval, a tender package will shortly go to selected builders. Completion by the end of 2026 is envisaged. A Congregational financial appeal is underway which builds on existing bequests.

If you would like to give to this appeal to help us connect better with people who live and visit Sydney, you can donate to St Pauls Sydney Lutheran

Church, BSB 704942 Account 101136102 ref: 'Front Church'.

The manse is undergoing major maintenance and upgrades to prepare a comfortable home for the Mtata family.

Through every transition, challenge, and opportunity, we give thanks to God for His faithfulness and steady guidance. We pray that St Paul's will continue to be a place where Christ is proclaimed, all people are welcomed, and God's transforming love is shared in the heart of Sydney.

Bridgitte Willshire,
Mission and Ministry Facilitator

Good Shepherd Sutherland

Our congregation has around 40 people and average attendance is around 13 people each week. Our numbers have continued to decline as more of our members have moved away and our members age. However, we are thankful to God for the blessings our ministry has

received during the last two years despite these challenges, including an increased number of inquiries and visits from people interested in attending our services and at least one person dropping in because of our increased signage. We pray that God will guide us to take advantage of these opportunities to share the Gospel with our local community.

In 2025 we began sharing Pastor Bruce Flanagan, who returned to Australia from Vietnam and was ordained as a Pastor of the Lutheran Church of Australia, with Living Waters Liverpool. Pastor Bruce's arrival and ministry has brought new energy and ideas to our congregation and in the last year Pastor Bruce has been able to reach out to new people in our local community who we have not been able to reach before.

As we only have Pastor Bruce 50% of the time, we are also well served by a dedicated group of lay readers and one lay preacher who typically prepare and lead 2-3 services each

month under Pastor Bruce's oversight. We are grateful to the District Bishop for licencing some of our members to administer Holy Communion so that we are able to receive the sacrament each Sunday.

Our lay preacher Alison Short is now a Specific Ministry Pastor Candidate with a view to performing additional pastoral duties for our congregation on a part-time basis to supplement Pastor Bruce's ministry.

In the last year we have also taken steps to refresh the interior of our church building including by purchasing new higher quality chairs which are more suitable for older people. We are currently exploring ways in which we can make our church building more accessible to elderly and disabled people.

We look forward to the future that God is setting out for us.

David Brooks, Chairperson

Congregations and Parishes – Riverina Region

St Luke's, Albury

I love where I live! I love where I worship!

God does work in mysterious ways and that includes in our congregation. This is evident in the number of children who have recently come to St Luke's and been baptised, after we were wondering about the effort to update Child Safe online. Not only that, an adult baptism of a person led by God to worship with our congregation and enjoy its fellowship. The mothers of the baptised children and other mothers gather for more than playgroup, as they requested Bible study. Even though we can't provide Scripture teachers to bring God's word to students, we provide financial support to the local churches who do.

St Luke's members are blessed by the caring and welcoming worship community to which they belong. St Luke's has a wonderful volunteer ethos and we are better equipped through the Frontier courses in Word

and Sacrament and Lay Reading. It is wonderful to see a Worship Committee active again, also including Children's Ministry. While we don't have our own confirmation class or Youth group at this time, we are blessed in that there is a southern Riverina Youth group.

We are thankful for the wonderful cohesion amongst the congregation's members. There is unity and generosity of spirit. And regular Sunday lunches together! We are thankful for all our volunteers who contribute to worship and congregational life. This even includes IT help for many older members. We are thankful for the trickle of new members.

We give thanks for a significant reserve from the sale of a property some years ago, as this allows us to maintain our assets in good order, including a major painting project across three buildings recently. We are thankful for the generous givers in our midst, ensuring that the congregation can do God's work, and

for an MOU with our sister congregation, St Peter's, for the sharing the Pastor expenses and enabling us to provide a more suitable manse. Also, we are thankful for our weekly trading table which adds to supporting donations to ALWS and the LCA Disaster Fund.

Our busy craft group organised an Autumn Fair which made Albury people more aware of our church, and they have supported St Peter's work with Samaritan's Purse Shoebox project and ALWS sewing projects.

The Great Commission seems an overwhelming task to connect the wider community with Jesus, but we manage in small ways. We do it in our support of local Scripture teachers in schools and our support of the Jindera Church Planter, which, in turn, leads to school families coming to St Luke's. The Mum's club includes mostly non-members and the Bible studies connect them with Jesus. We also have a member who leads Bible studies in a retirement village.

St Luke's looks forward seeing God's hand in maintaining growth similar to recent times, but it will be with some challenges, such as volunteer burnout and replacing retiring leaders and security improvements after a few break-ins in 2026. We pray that God will sustain us to continue his work.

Terry Caldwell, Chairperson

Jindera Church Plant

The Jindera Church plant continues to run fortnightly Friday Night services for young families. These services are now almost entirely run by Primary school aged children. Children MC the services, lead the music and dancing, and get involved in dramatic retellings of bible stories. It is fantastic to see how God can use young people, and because of them we are seeing more families with children in the early grades join us for worship.

While this ministry was conceived as church plant, over time it has morphed into a children's ministry of several nearby LCA congregations. This is equipping us with more volunteers, but it's also starting to regrow Riverina congregations, as families are starting to look for a Sunday services.

While this isn't the original intent for this ministry, I see it as a better result. We have around 180 students at St John's School, and no one congregation can meet the needs of all those people. However, by having different congregations in the area offering different forms of worship, we are more likely to find good congregational fits for more families. This epitomises the District's commitment to Walk Together in Mission. Sometimes we need to let go of our own ideas of how our ministry should look, and embrace the work that God is already doing.

This ministry is providing an opportunity for the school and congregation communities to meet together and get to know each other. It's happening in a neutral setting – it's not quite a school event, and it's not a standard church service. Holding services on Friday nights means members of other congregations can meet the school community without giving up their own Sunday gatherings. It's because of these

emerging relationships that school families are starting to feel comfortable enough to try a Sunday Service.

The biggest challenges at the moment are time constraints. The Burrumbuttock Parish is currently in vacancy, and there is a shortage of retired Pastors in our region. This is putting a lot of added pressure on both myself and Pastor John Borchert to meet the needs of the community. We are also looking towards a new Regional Model of Ministry for the Southern Riverina. I see this as an exciting step forward to build on the work we've already started, but it will be a challenge to get it off the ground and running smoothly.

Peter Reed Church Planter & Chaplain, St John's Lutheran School, Jindera

St Peter's Lavington

In the last two years there has been a regular flow of Sunday attendances at worship services. With lay readers and alternate Sacrament services the congregation has been very appreciative of their support for Worship at St Peter's. A Christmas Eve Carols Service is also held.

St Peter's have recently updated their sound system to more modern IT equipment. The upgrade of the Manse refurbishment is now completed and a new garden has been planted.

Activities: The Women's Fellowship continues to hold monthly Bible Study afternoons along with a meeting. A very successful Market Day is held each November and, a Trivia Evening in May which is a fundraiser for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child.

Submitted by Maureen Timms
St Peter's Chairperson

Henty Parish

The Henty parish comprises three congregations, Henty, Culcairn, and Pleasant Hills. I will refer to them here as one congregation. God continues to work in many ways. These often are not seen by the pastor, as members of the congregation speak to and show by their acts, Christ's blessings to those they meet, whether that be on the street, in visits to

homes, the hospital, the retirement village, or just in the local bakery.

As pastor I am extremely blessed by having such a caring congregation that works together not only for my sake but also for others. Morning teas and lunches after church service are an important feature, often perhaps taken for granted, but wonderful for communication amongst visitors, as well as locals. It is here that many things are discussed and discovered if we will but listen. The parish also operates with the local Lutheran primary school. It also has two joint services with the local public school for those students there who do religious instruction.

The Henty congregation also participates in organising an open Easter service in the cemetery, and the joint Christmas service in the park. A choir comprising members from other churches and as many other voices as can be obtained, practice in the Henty church. Even with these and other missional activities my congregation is an ageing congregation and so our challenge remains the future of the congregation's existence. This however is more down to demographics than other factors.

I also don't believe that pastors necessarily give sufficient credit to their wives. Although my wife does not hold any specific role in the church, she is of great benefit to the ministry of Jesus Christ. This is through her visits, and discussions, helping those in need, by often just listening to their concerns. As you may be aware, women may speak to other women whereas they may not speak to a man on some issues regardless of whether he is a pastor or not. Again, Christ gave man a helper and we should be very appreciative of that. Thank you.

Pr Darryl Shoesmith

Trinity Bethel

The members of Bethel congregation give thanks to our loving God for another year of worship, fellowship and blessings.

Our thanks to Pastor Christian for ministering to us up until his resignation from the Parish.

We are most grateful to visiting and retired ministers, Pastor Ian, Pastor Ernie, Pastor John and Peter Reid, so as we can usually have one preaching service per month, besides a regular lay reading service.

Membership and attendance have remained stable and we continue to alternate and enjoy worshipping with Holy Cross members. St Peter's Gerogery continue to join us also at some of our third Sunday family services, which are as popular as ever, where we all enjoy good food and fellowship with one another.

We held our usual Good Friday and Christmas Eve services, which were well attended, including welcome, regular visitors.

We are blessed to still have some dedicated musicians to lead us in singing, whenever they are available, and to lay readers for their dedication. Grateful thanks go to members who regularly contribute with preparations for services, lunches, cuppas and attend to maintenance, cleaning and mowing of church grounds and cemetery.

As we enter another year, we pray that God will bless our gatherings, strengthen our faith and guide us, as we look forward to many blessings and opportunities He may intend for us.

Lois Bakic, Secretary

Holy Cross Burrumbuttock

Preaching and Holy Communion services continued to be held twice a month, with morning tea shared after the 9.00am service. When Pastor became unwell, we were grateful for the support of visiting pastors engaged on a casual basis, particularly Pastor Ernie Kiss. Importantly, the fellowship and community connection offered through morning tea continued uninterrupted. Thank you to all members for your participation and generous catering.

Our Women's Guild remained well attended and continues to provide a valued opportunity for members of our congregation, neighbouring congregations, and the wider community to gather and enjoy time together. The Guild also continues its support of the local school by

providing resources for use during Religious Education.

Church maintenance needs were minimal this year, with general tidying undertaken before services.

As a Parish, we met with Pastor Ian Rensch, Strategic Directions Facilitator, and together developed our Walking in Mission Statement:

"With our eyes fixed on Jesus, moved by the Holy Spirit, we go each day to bless our community and each other."

From this, the Burrumbuttock congregation was tasked with facilitating a playgroup. Under the leadership of Jan, and with her strong connections to young mothers in the community, along with support from the pre-school, meetings and gatherings were organised to encourage participation.

Families with children under school age have met at the pre-school on Wednesdays and joined in the pre-school's end-of-year Christmas event.

Peter Reed continues to lead the Church Plant at St John's Chapel in Jindera, where worship is held every second Friday night. Prayer groups and games nights at the Fox & Brew continue, and a Youth Group has now been established in response to the needs identified by young members of our Parish.

In accordance with the decision of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand to permit the ordination of women, our congregation was required to vote on whether we would consider calling a pastor of either gender in the future. Our congregation voted against this.

A significant community event this year was the Burrumbuttock 150 Years Celebration, in which many of our members played integral roles.

Numerous meetings were attended, and considerable time was given to organising events including the Retrospective Fashion Parade, the Street Parade, the writing of a history book article on Holy Cross and its influence in the community, an Organ Recital in the Church, and a Cemetery Walk led by our members, highlighting the stories of forebears interred there. The celebrations

concluded with an Ecumenical Service at Holy Cross, led by Pastor Fandrich, followed by a BBQ catered by our congregation at the pre-school.

Pastor Fandrich tendered his resignation, after eleven years of service to our parish. As Chairman of his home congregation, I was honoured to publicly acknowledge the significant contributions he and his family have made to Holy Cross at his final service at Bethlehem Jindera. We also thank him for his willingness to conclude the year by attending the pre-school and Burrumbuttock Primary School Christmas events. His involvement was especially appreciated given his many years of teaching Scripture at the school.

While we face ongoing challenges, we are strengthened by prayer and our faith in our Lord and Saviour. We are blessed that our congregation continues to find companionship, encouragement, and friendship within our Church family.

Yours in Christ

Craig Severin, Chairman

St Peters Gerogery

We faced another busy year, but with the help of God and the enthusiasm of members it proved a successful and inspiring year for all concerned.

Easter Dawn Service proved successful with good attendance.

Carols Night saw us make the decision to have it in the hall because of expected severe weather. Even though numbers were down because of pending conditions, all had a good night, and the rain made its presence known.

Two Carveries were held during the year with good attendance on both nights. We appreciated the help given by other church members in facilitating the running and catering process.

During the year a big attempt was made to clean up the block next to the church where the old Manse still stands. The work by all those able to turn up proved successful. The maintenance from now on should prove less onerous.

Our Lutheran Women Fellowship group numbers remain much the same as last year. Meetings held in the homes of members. Pastor Christian who presented bible studies on these occasions will be sadly missed in the coming year.

The Christmas hamper program again organised by the woman's fellowship continued once again this year with recipients being very appreciative of their efforts.

October saw the support for the Kairos Mannus Prison program in the supply of baked biscuits.

Although a church small in numbers the ability to maintain the enthusiasm for what is needed to maintain these programs is quite remarkable.

Phillip Collinge, Secretary

Bethlehem Jindera

Numbers continue to remain steady averaging between 25 to 35 varying from Sunday to Sunday. Christmas Eve saw the numbers boosted with families visiting for the holidays. We welcomed members from the other congregations in the Parish on various occasions throughout the year.

The fourth Sunday in the month continued to be a more contemporary style of music and shorter liturgy components with Jono leading. Thanks to Peter Reed who also assisted in the services when Pr. Christian was away. And lay leaders who led services for which we were very grateful.

We were very appreciative of the pastors who helped out with services following Pr. Christian's resignation.

Many members took the opportunity to be part of Pr. Ian Rentsch's workshops looking at the future of the Parish.

The Jindera Church was the host church for the Jindera Ecumenical Carols evening held at the Village Green on Friday December 12th. The evening was most successful with a lively participation by local school children and ably led by a band consisting of local musicians.

The subdivision plans for part of the church property have progressed well with concrete evidence of earth works

having occurred. All blocks in Stage 1 have been reserved for sale. This has been a very lengthy and exasperating process but finally progress is happening.

Financial commitments to the Burrumbuttock Parish have been undertaken in a timely manner.

Although the future is uncertain we can only rely on our heavenly Father to guide us in all our decision making and have faith.

Prayerfully submitted

Jenny O'Neill, Chairman

Bethlehem Wagga Wagga

Over the past two years, we have seen God at work in and through our congregation in Wagga Wagga in both faithful service and meaningful celebration. A significant highlight has been the celebration of 100 years of Lutheran worship in Wagga, giving thanks for God's enduring faithfulness across generations. This milestone reminded us of our strong foundations and renewed our sense of purpose moving forward.

We have experienced many blessings, particularly through our ministry connection with Lutheran School Wagga Wagga. The school continues to be a vital part of our mission, providing opportunities to share the love of Jesus with students, families, and staff. We give thanks for the relationships being built and strengthened through this partnership. Our regular support of 'Carevan' has also been a blessing, both in meeting practical needs within the community and in shaping a spirit of generosity within our congregation.

We are deeply thankful for the dedication of our members, volunteers, and leaders who give generously of their time and gifts in various ways. We are also grateful for the encouragement and shared mission we experience with other congregations across the Riverina and across the wider LCA NSW.

God continues to place before us opportunities to connect with the wider Wagga community. Through our school, local outreach, and community support initiatives, we can build relationships and create

welcoming spaces where people can encounter Jesus.

We do face challenges, including sustaining volunteer engagement, navigating changing community dynamics, and reaching younger generations. Yet we trust God's guidance as we respond to these challenges.

Looking ahead, we are excited about growing our connections with families through the school, strengthening outreach efforts, and continuing to walk alongside others in mission within the District and the LCA NSW, sharing in God's work together.

Pr David Cherry

Walla Walla Parish

Parish Vision Statement:

"Growing together in love and service to each other and the wider community, intersecting faith and real life with the heart of Jesus."

Looking through the lens of the theme for this year's NSW-ACT District Synod Convention: The Great Commission from Matthew 28:19–20, it's a helpful reminder that the mission doesn't belong to us. It's God's mission. He is already at work in the world, and in our communities, and in people's lives. Our calling is simply to join Him in what He is already doing. And that shifts how we look at things.

It can be tempting to look back over the past synodical term and think that "not much" has happened. There may not have been large or dramatic events, but this perspective misses the steady and faithful work of God among us.

Each week, God's people have gathered for worship—receiving His Word, His grace, and His encouragement. Week by week, they have been sent out again into daily life, equipped to serve in homes, workplaces, and the wider community. God working through ordinary people in ordinary places.

Highlights, however, were that both Zion, Walla Walla and Salem, Alma Park celebrated the Centenary of their church buildings. Also in 2026, congregations of the Southern Riverina gathered together for a time of worship, fellowship and workshop led by Bishop Richard Schwedes.

That was a helpful time to pause and reflect—not just on what has been, but on what could be as they look toward a more focused regional model of ministry. It was a reminder of how important it is that we keep praying for wisdom, for unity, and for open eyes to recognise the opportunities God places in front of us.

We have so much to be thankful for as a community of God's people. There has been quiet serving behind the scenes without seeking recognition. The many conversations, words of encouragement, and acts of care that often go unnoticed but are deeply significant. There is also something powerful in the simple act of gathering together around God's Word, and that is a gift we should

never take for granted. Above all, we give thanks because God has been faithful to us, consistently and steadfastly, week in and week out.

Of course, we also face challenges, as every congregation does. At times, we feel the limitations of energy and resources. We know the difficulty of connecting with a world that can often feel distant from church life. There is also the ongoing tension between holding onto what has been familiar and meaningful in the past, while remaining open to where God may be leading us in the future. Yet none of these challenges are new to God, and none of them are beyond His power or care.

So, we look ahead – towards deepening our sense of unity, discovering new ways to work

together, being more intentional about noticing where God is at work, and being open to the unexpected ways He might lead us. It is worth continually asking ourselves: where is God already at work among us, and how can we faithfully join in?

We can be encouraged by Jesus' promise: "Surely I am with you always." That's what gives us confidence—not our plans, but His presence, and they are actually part of something much bigger.

May the Lord continue to guide and bless us as we take part in His mission—together.

Respectfully submitted,

Pr John Borchert

Congregations and Parishes – North West Region

St John's Gilgandra

It is a blessing that we are still able to worship together as a congregation on a weekly basis despite only being a small group. We are grateful for the pastoral assistance we receive from the Dubbo congregation with visiting lay readers authorised for Word and Sacrament Ministry and preparation of weekly services, power points and seasonal resources. We are thankful that Brant Waterson, SMP Candidate, can lead fortnightly services and join in fellowship.

Our participation in Gilgandra unity week fosters our connections with the wider community. St John's weekly bible study is attended by members from other denominations as well. The Open Way Bookshop, originally founded by our congregation, is now run with the help from all churches. We annually give financial support to the Chaplain at our local school and are blessed to hold monthly Lutheran Women's fellowship with the Dubbo congregation.

Our challenges include isolation, in terms of distance, from other Parishes in the district. The average age of our congregation is high, but

we had a new young member join us a couple of years ago.

Inge Rämisch-Baker,
Parish Secretary

St Mark's Dubbo

As our Parish is in a vacancy, everybody has stepped up in their efforts in supporting each other through visiting and showing love through action, using the gifts our Saviour has given us. Four lay readers are authorised for Word and Sacrament ministry, and we are grateful for Brant Waterson, SMP Candidate, leading our service every fortnight.

Our main community outreach is the weekly school breakfast program which has been ongoing for many years. We had the opportunity to assist a homeless person who took shelter on our verandah. St Mark's supports LWS through the Advent offerings.

Regular home group bible studies, Lutheran Women, Lenten and Advent studies help grow our faith and encourage fellowship.

We are challenged by falling membership numbers and an aging congregation but encourage visiting

St John's Gilgandra. We are isolated by distance from other Parishes.

We have been blessed with the attendance of young families and arrival of several babies. We look forward to growing in faith, supporting LWS, attending Sisterhood and Better Blokes. We enjoyed hosting district church council meetings and District Lutheran Women events. We value communication within and commend the work of our church district office staff, thank you for your service.

Inge Rämisch-Baker
Parish Secretary

Temora Lutheran Community Church

Sites: Trinity Temora and Zion Trungley Hall. Over the last decade we have focussed on being more intergenerational in our ministry. This includes trying to grow the congregation younger. More recently, we worked on some strategic directions with District Facilitator, Pr Ian Rentsch. Two major things occurred since those meetings.

Firstly, more people (including some younger adults) stepped up into new roles such as lay reading and leadership. As a result, nearly half our

Ministry Council is now under 37yo. This is a big change from 5 years ago, when everyone on that committee was over 40yo. So, our goal to grow younger is bearing fruit, including retaining young families and training younger leaders.

The second thing is that in October 2024, we took over the FoodCare ministry in Temora (from a congregation that had closed) and we also opened a second branch in Barmedman a few weeks later. As a Foodbank agency, recipients of Centrelink payments can purchase discount food. Each week, more people are signing up due to increasing financial pressures, and we have served over 400 families in 18 months. This year we moved into a larger premises and have visions to develop the care aspect of this ministry.

Other highlights include continuing to run our local Christian Bookshop (which is an increasingly rare resource). We now have 3 people licensed for Sacrament Ministry in our congregation, plus another 2 licensed to help with providing communion to people who are housebound, which helps us minister to our older members.

We give thanks that our average attendance in the last 4 years continues to slowly and steadily rise. We attribute this, in part, to continually praying for a healthy, growing congregation, and a pastor staying long-term.

We also give thanks for the long service of life-time members. For

example, a number of long-term lay readers recently retired (one did this from his early 20's until he turned 80yo). We also give thanks for the many years of women's fellowship in the congregation, which recently closed due to aging members. One challenge is how to encourage these women without the monthly meetings. Another challenge is that, in the last 18 months, three of our older, most reliable, regular, prayerful, gentlemen are now in glory. This has been a massive loss for our congregation, and we are very thankful for God giving us them and their humble service. We are also having difficulty finding lay readers for our Trundle Hall site.

But buds of hope are also blooming. This includes a monthly Ladies Lunch and bible study on Sundays that has started, plus a few people moving back to the area rejoining the church.

More broadly, we continue to walk with others in mission through our local ecumenical church services (which are well supported by the Lutherans), our ongoing partnership with West Wyalong congregation, the annual visits by the Warrambui interns, and involvement in district events.

We look forward to the new things that God is doing in our midst.

Pr Darren Kupke

Immanuel, West Wyalong

We have seen God at work in the way he looks after our members. For example, our oldest member (96yo) recently had a farm accident where he was flown to Canberra hospital, but miraculously had relatively few injuries and is now home again recovering.

We continue to appreciate the support from Temora which allows us to have a pastor lead services each fortnight. However, when he is unavailable, we usually cancel services as no one is willing to lay read and the use of technology is challenging for most of our remaining members.

One significant challenge for the congregation is age of members. Around 80% of the congregation are around 80yo, and later this year, our youngest member will turn 50yo. Not much changes, but we give thanks that God continues to sustain us. For example, most exec have held their role for over a decade. We give thanks that for the new treasurer who has recently taken on the role. We also give thanks for over 4 decades (and over half a lifetime) of service by the previous treasurer.

At times, we wonder what the future holds, but also don't know what God has planned around the corner, and marvel at the ways he continues to sustain us so far.

Pr Darren Kupke

District Church Council

The District Church Council has the responsibility for overseeing the District, making decisions and overseeing the implementation of those decisions between synodical conventions.

We are very thankful for all who have served on District Church Council in the last synodical term:

- Bishop Richard Schwedes (LifeWay Epping)
- Pastor John Borchert (Walla Walla Parish) – Assistant Bishop
- Pastor Darren Jaensch (Holy Cross Belconnen)
- Leigh Caldwell (St Lukes Albury)
- Bruce Arnold (St Pauls Sydney)
- Tony von Brandstein (Holy Cross Belconnen)
- Jeannie Kenney (Henty Parish – Culcairn)
- Ward Westphal (Immanuel Woden)
- Consultant: Stephen Fogerty (Administrator commenced March 2026)
- Russell Veerhuis (Administrator resigned March 2026)

Ward Westphal is retiring from DCC in 2026 after 13 years of service, and we thank Ward for his thoughtful and insightful contributions to our meetings, his role in liaising with the Warrambui Board and we hope to catch with him from time to time.

Throughout the year we aim to meet quarterly, in each of the four regions, namely Riverina, Canberra, North West and Sydney. Meetings in 2026 began on Thursday after a communal lunch and finish before lunch on Friday.

One of the purposes of meeting in each region is for us to connect better with a local parish, congregation and ministries of the District. We often join members of the parish over a meal on the Thursday evening, sharing news of the District and listening to the congregations/ministry's blessings and challenges.

In the last synodical term (two years and five months) we have met at:

- Springwood - Sydney
- Albury - Riverina
- Newcastle – Coastal North
- Belconnen – Canberra
- Liverpool - Sydney
- Henty – Riverina
- Dubbo – Central West
- Walla Walla – Riverina

Proposed meeting sites for the remainder of 2026 are Temora and Epping.

The Strategic Directions, Walking Together in Mission guides much of the work of our District. With our six priorities being:

1. Supporting congregations and ministries in mission and ministry
2. Supporting congregations and ministries in transition
3. Alternative models of ministry that best serve the District
4. Planting and renewing congregations
5. Networking and connections between congregations and ministries
6. District Leadership through the Bishop leading Leadership Teams

For these reasons each grant application that we receive goes through a three-meeting process. The Mission and Ministry Committee assesses whether the application fits into the overall Strategic Plan. The Finance Advisory Council assesses whether the application meets financial criteria to fulfill the Plan. The

District Church Council then takes all of these assessments into account as they consider whether to approve or say no to the application.

There have been some personnel changes as we work to implement the Strategic Plan across the District. Pr Ian Rentsch, the Strategic Plan Facilitator, will be retiring later this year, and is working with Michael Dobie during the first part of the year as he steps into this role on a part time basis, and the new Communications Officer is Nikki Spaans. Both of these continue to support the District congregations and ministries and report to DCC regularly.

After restructure of LCA Church Wide office and the ceasing of the Local Mission Department we were no longer served by Pastor Nathan Hedt who provided some critical guidance and input on mission opportunities. We thank Nathan for his work and pray that the LCA is able to reignite a local mission focus through the Church wide office.

The DCC also receives regular reports from all church planters, many of our grant recipients. We also greatly encourage missional education through the Frontier School of Mission and its courses and receives reports from the Frontier Advisory Board as it continues to respond to the missional needs of the District. This year has seen an increased emphasis from Frontier on lay training for leading worship, with well attended courses in three zones of the District, with the fourth course to be held in the Central West zone in September.

The board of Turning Point Ministries has been released from their responsibilities with thanks, following the advice to our last Synod that they will be stepping down due to the challenges in running viable youth camps in our District. We are currently in conversation about the best way to continue this important ministry for our children, youth and families, and have been encouraged that a Young Adults camp with the support of Belconnen and Warrambui took place early in 2026.

The DCC oversees the specific ministries of the District which consist

of all our congregations, Warrambui, Lutheran Aged Care Albury (LACA) and our Lutheran schools, including St Pauls College. St Paul's College belongs to the district while the other schools are directly responsible to their local congregations. The DCC has a long association with Lutheran Education Victoria New South Wales and Tasmania (LEVNT) to oversee all Lutheran schools in NSW, and LEVNT reports to us at each meeting. We are very thankful for the wisdom, support and the manner in which they work with us in partnership to assist our schools to be places where the Gospel is shared and people gain a good education.

We also have the responsibility of filling vacancies on boards across the district, as well as reviewing new constitutions for congregations, of which there have been many during the last 12 months.

Thank you to all of the members of the DCC who contribute their time and expertise to this important governance and administrative committee. We are blessed to have such a diverse and talented group of people serving the District, and we thank God for them.

In response to questions regarding Warrambui's financial situation DCC passed the following:

- 1. Monthly budgets with operational, missional and capital costs separated to be reviewed and monitored, by our DCC through our District Administrator.**
- 2. We have initiated the team includes the District Administrator, the Camp Manager, 2 DCC members, the FAC chair, two Warrambui Board members and the Bishop as soon as practically possible, on the understanding that this team must make recommendations to the DCC and the Warrambui board, on the sustainability of Warrambui and the reduction of Warrambui's debt, and that these reports are made on an interim basis, with final recommendations by June 2027.**

Leigh Caldwell, DCC Secretary

District Treasurer



Bruce Arnold

The finances of the District are entrusted to the Financial Advisory Committee. As our FAC meetings have become noticeably shorter over the past several years, so I will keep this report short as well.

A large portion of the proceeds of selling Concord House have been invested in a diversified share portfolio, with both Australian and overseas holdings. The principal value of these investments goes up and down with the share market. Of course we like our investment to grow in value, but we are generally not perturbed if they fall in a given quarter or year. But we count on the dividends we receive, which with the interest earnings on our cash balances, largely pays for the cost of running the District Office. (We also look to cover these administrative costs with contributions from member congregations, and are grateful to every congregation that donates.) We have been showing deficits over the past few years, but the deficits largely correspond to our expenditures on mission initiatives. While they constitute 'expenses' for accounting purposes (and result in a bottom-line loss), we consider them

investments. After all, Jesus cautioned us against burying our talents!

Where we spend much of our time, though, is considering the financial aspects of the Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre. At a long-ago District Synod, when we decided to give Warrambui a fresh start by forgiving their debt, I said to the delegates that we should consider Warrambui as if it were the District's second home. We had the assets to allocate to owning the property, and on an ongoing basis, Warrambui could "wash its face" with the camping business — kind of like putting one's vacation home out for short-term rental to cover the upkeep. In effect, the mission dividends that Warrambui was able to pay the District were free.

I fear this is no longer the case, and needs prayerful consideration at this convention of synod. The business was crippled by Covid-19, and we used that time to shut the camp for a necessary upgrade; the District loaned Warrambui the project cost. Unfortunately the project came in far above budget, and the camping business has never recovered fully. As Warrambui is owned by the District, the District Church Council has not required Warrambui to pay debt service on the loan, and has been covering Warrambui's cash

shortfalls by contributions to capital. These contributions to capital have increased the value at which we hold Warrambui on our books. Our auditors, though, have now given us a qualified opinion on our financial statements, querying whether our

investment in Warrambui is recoverable. We will need to make some hard decisions soon as to whether we can afford our "second home".

Allow me to thank the Finance Advisory Committee, ably chaired by Mark Waldron, and the District Church Council for its oversight. I also welcome Stephen Fogerty to the role of District Administrator — a role instrumental to the financial workings of the District — who has immediately begun to increase the efficiency with which we manage our cash. I would also like to thank the Warrambui board, chaired by Neal Mason. While they no doubt felt called to the position because of their large and generous hearts for mission, they have found themselves spending much of their time on financial matters, which has been difficult. Please keep us all in your prayers, that we may exercise discernment and wisdom as we fulfil our role as stewards of the District's finances.

Bruce R Arnold

Investments in Ministry

Grant applications approved over the last Synodical term by the DCC have been:

Grant Recipient	Date	Total Amount
Warrambui Easter Camp	Extended for 2027	up to \$11000
St Pauls St Marys Lutheran Church – chairs	2026	\$6160
Molonglo Church Plant – Woden	3 years extended until 2027	\$153000
Lifeway Westside Church Plant – 3 years transferred to St Pauls St Marys July 1, 2026	until end of 2026	up to \$150000
Southern Riverina Church Plant	3 years extended until 2027	\$323,681
Riverina Schools – demographic study	2025/26 2 years	\$30000
St Pauls Sydney Lutheran Church -Church Worker	3 years extended until 2027	\$349,205
Tuggeranong Lutheran Church – Community Worker	3 years extended until 2027	\$192077
Lifeway Asian Ministry Grant	3 years completes 2026	\$60000
Intercessors Weekend	annual grant if needed	\$8500 per year
Frontier Mission School	committed for 3 years to 2027	\$150000
Pastors Wives retreat	annual grant if needed	\$6000 per year
St Pauls Sydney Ecclesiastical Outreach Show – underwrite performances	July 2025 if needed	up to \$1950
Port Macquarie Lutheran Church - Building extension	2024	\$25000
LCA International Mission Cultivate Programme – participant grant	2026 – not used	\$2000

District Income and Expenditure

Income	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	
Operating Income						
contributions from congregations	132,250	132,600	128,900	132,850	128,750	1
contributions from individuals incl. LLL interest foregone	8,020	8,477	6,200	2,169	5,000	
Turning Point Ministries camp revenues	42,591	44,057	50,000	56,500	57,000	2
Frontier School of Mission	85,670	91,481	101,000	81,192	116,500	3
Other District revenues	126,538	85,473	79,704	87,441	113,558	
Earmarked grants and donations	18,535	38,809	26,000	46,720	47,000	
Investment Income						
Interest	32,578	58,887	21,000	73,357	46,000	4
Investment Income	17,020	18,172	19,000	18,724	19,500	5
Dividends and Distributions from Investment Funds	566,488	575,404	560,000	666,019	500,000	6
Proceeds from Asset / Investment Portfolio Sales		678,804				
Warrambui profit/(loss) accounted for using equity method	-59,101	-210,604		-164,530	60,000	7
Government grants	0	0				
Total Income	970,588	1,521,561	991,804	1,000,440	1,093,308	

Expenditure

Contribution to the LCA	218,000	250,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	8
Employee benefits expense	398,070	508,580	512,338	495,219	556,364	
Turning Point Ministries camp expense	38,585	54,409	50,000	48,405	57,000	2
Frontier School of Mission expense	85,670	91,481	101,336	78,607	107,000	3
Depreciation and amortisation expense	172,866	185,947	178,216	182,677	178,216	
Other expenses						
Office expenses	72,309	82,670	85,650	86,970	87,350	
Ministry support expenses	45,858	46,672	47,000	51,606	55,000	
Property Expenses	11,682	19,790	20,500	33,347	20,500	
Event expenses	33,476	41,441	29,000	28,273	57,000	
Legal/Audit/Bookkeeping expenses	18,651	14,172	27,000	15,056	28,000	
Travel expenses	17,350	19,844	19,500	13,806	20,000	
Grants expended	18,535	38,809	26,000	46,518	47,000	
Other expenses	106		8,000		8,000	
Total Operating Expenses	1,131,156	1,353,815	1,304,540	1,280,484	1,421,430	

Operating Surplus	-160,569	167,746	-312,736	-280,043	-328,122	
Mission development expense	606,758	508,035	551,643	524,868	664,144	
Deficit for the Year	-767,327	-340,289	-864,379	-804,911	-992,266	
Other Comprehensive Income						
Revaluation of land	-265,000	157,605	0	129,111	0	
Revaluation of investment funds	1,276,358	967,999	0	508,498	0	9
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	244,031	785,315	-864,379	-167,302	-992,266	

Notes:

- Contributions remain consistent despite congregations in some locales remaining fiscally restrained.
- Turning Point Ministries adult programs are witnessing a strong resurgence after a number of difficult years.
- Frontier School of Mission support to the congregations continues with District support.
- Interest income is derived from cash management accounts with LLL and District Loans.
- Investment income comprises rental from the Glenmore Park Manse
- Cash returns continue to deliver solid initial yields across the International and Domestic Portfolio despite headwinds in Capital Values.
- Warrambui continues to struggle to return to the historic performance levels, however the District is working to return to profit, however, the projection may have been forecasting the turn
- Contribution to the LCA has been reduced by 20%. Future LCA donations are being evaluated.
- Investment Funds have experienced robust Capital Growth however, Global Markets have proven challenging in recent months putting downward pressure on values. Despite the uncertainty, in generally the Investments remain above entry price.

District Administrator



**Stephen
Fogerty**

It is an absolute honour to extend the warmest welcome to all delegates, attendees and special guests to 2026 NSW and ACT District Synod.

First, may you join me in acknowledging and thanking my predecessor, Mr Russell Veerhuis for his commitment and dedication to the role for some 13 years and ask you to continue to pray for him in his new role and for his family as they settle back into regional NSW.

May I utilise this opportunity to provide a brief overview of myself. I grew up in a neighbouring suburb of the District Office, however, I now reside on Sydney's Northern Beaches close to my home Congregation – Redeemer Lutheran Church Narrabeena. Prior to accepting the opportunity to serve in the District Office, I have enjoyed a career in Private Investment, Funds Management and Banking in Australia and overseas with core competencies focussed on Real Estate and Capital Efficiency. I have also been involved with various Ministries and Mission outreach programs globally.

During my initial months I have had the privilege to meet many throughout the District, albeit mainly by phone. The May District Church Council (DCC) meeting was fortuitously convened in Walla Walla, affording me the opportunity to visit some of our Colleges / Schools and Aged Care Facilities; both of which were highly impressive and a credit to the District.

Under the leadership of Bishop Richard, the District has continued to sow heavily into the Congregations and various Ministries to continue to propel the District forward in the vision of a Mission focussed body of believers, lifting up the Name of Jesus locally. These diverse Missional needs are as eclectic as our composition, to which this challenge is led with unwavering passion by and through Bishop Richard.

As the District continues to sow with strong resolve, it also recognises this as a kairos time to strengthen our

fiscal management to ensure the generational sustainability of not only the Congregations, but also the District itself. To this end we are evaluating various opportunities to ensure astute financial practices to provide longevity for many decades.

We are reviewing the way we optimise our capital efficiency through utilising higher interest earning bank accounts and aligning Term Investment maturities with periodical cashflow requirements, therefore working our Capital harder, while ensuring the District's Missional objectives are delivered. To accomplish this, we have initiated a program to develop monthly annual budgets to better understand, manage and utilise the District resources most efficiently. Through implementing strong cash management protocols, coupled with solid District Investments (as advised and directed by the Finance Advisory Committee - FAC), we will continue to implement strong fiscal rigour, therefore providing for future generations.

As we work to strengthen grace filled governance across the operations to better service the District long term, we have been investigating ways to improve not only fiscal management but also accountability. One such program recently initiated was to engage the Chair of the FAC to lead a course in Reading the Books of Account for the (DCC). The purpose is to ensure ALL members of the DCC can address financial matters with greater confidence, thereby demonstrating a commitment to Godly fiscal oversight.

Another program driven by Bishop Richard is to support those congregations in need of book-keeping and electronic banking requirements, a service currently provided not only to congregations but also the National Suomi Conference. Please reach out for more information regarding these services to support your congregation.

The District has intentionally sought to build strong relationships with LLL to deliver positive outcomes. LLL, under the new stewardship of Karen

Pienaar, has been very responsive to working in partnership to achieve strong deliverables. For the first time we have negotiated priority interest rates for the District Office Term Investments, while securing Missional grants and sponsorship including \$5,000 towards meeting the cost of this Synod. As the relationship continues to strengthen, we look forward to co-labouring with LLL in fulfilling The Mission to jointly serve our community. Please contact the District Office for targeted access to key LLL personnel to meet your Term Investment and other banking needs.

We are grateful to those in Church House Adelaide for the support and encouragement they have shown. Through the continued development of those relationships by Bishop Richard with Bishop Paul and others, as well as all members of across the operational teams, including Brett Hausler, we continue to ensure that NSW and ACT are afforded a strong voice in National initiatives.

In addition, we acknowledge and thank the other Districts around the Country and New Zealand for their continued support and encouragement, particularly as we navigate this period of transition.

Finally an enormous thank you to every member of the District. Everyone in every congregation is a contributing and valued member of the Body whether they are paid, an acknowledge volunteer or an attending volunteer (those with no position yet encourage those around them just by being there), without every single one of you nothing would proceed and all we do would be like clanging cymbals. It is an extreme honour, privilege and very humbling to be afforded this opportunity by you to serve Jesus Christ our King and Saviour, the great District of NSW and ACT, Bishop Richard, the congregations and every single member of the community. Thank you.

Remember Jesus won't stone you but He will Rock your World!

Stephen Fogerty,
District Administrator

Warrambui Board



Neal Mason

Greetings from the Board of Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre. Since our last report to Synod, Warrambui has continued to live out its mission: to serve people by living Jesus, and to impact lives through the power of the Holy Spirit by being a loving, vibrant and growing community with the heart of Jesus. This has been a synod term of both real encouragement and honest challenge. Lives have been touched through the everyday hospitality of our team, and at the same time the Board has been squarely focused on the work of placing Warrambui on a financially sustainable footing. We are grateful for the District's continued partnership and prayer through both.

Serve people by living Jesus

Ask our staff and interns what Warrambui is for, and they will tell you the mission is not a statement on a wall, but something worked out each morning in devotions and then lived through the day. That culture shows up in small, practical acts of care. When a visiting tutor arrived at a camp unable to chew, our catering team noticed she was barely eating and — without being asked — prepared soft, nourishing meals for her for the rest of her stay; she described it as the best dietary care she had ever received at a camp. When a school group from a local Canberra school was hosted by a duty manager who had only recently returned from cancer surgery, a visiting staff member told her, “you live by being servant-hearted like Jesus, and I can see that in you and your whole team.” These are the moments guests remember, and they are Warrambui at its best.

These staff-led values continue to anchor our culture across a team drawn from many nations. For a number of our people, Warrambui has also been part of their family's journey to settling and gaining permanent residency in Australia — a quiet ministry in itself. As one of our interns put it, each morning's devotion sets

the day: “how I am going to be the hands and feet of Jesus by serving the team and the guests.”

The intern program remains a distinctive ministry of the centre. We hosted five interns in 2025 and again welcomed five in 2026, from Papua New Guinea and Australia. They serve guests, share their faith and culture, and grow as young leaders — many going on to leadership and ministry in their own communities and congregations. The Retreat Hut continues to offer pastors and others a quiet place, set apart, for prayer and rest.

Our strategic planning day in June 2026, facilitated by Pastor Ian Rentsch, affirmed what many across the District already know: that Warrambui is a practical, relational arm of the church — a spiritual “second home” and a place of welcome, formation and encounter for schools, congregations and community groups alike.

Operations

Bookings have continued their post-COVID recovery, with guest numbers steadily rebuilding toward pre-pandemic levels. For 2026 we expect to have over 100 bookings. The Dome facility has performed strongly, while lifting utilisation of the Village remains a focus. The rhythm of the year is uneven — a handful of very quiet months alongside busy periods in late winter and spring — and a central concern of the Board has been how to make better use of our people and facilities during the quieter periods.

The winding down of Turning Point Ministries has left a real gap in Lutheran youth camping across NSW and the ACT and has removed a source of bookings and ministry for the district. Over this synod term Warrambui has been actively gearing up to run camps of its own to help meet that need — including the governance and policy work required to do so safely and well — and we look forward to reporting on the fruit of that preparation.

Warrambui is seeking council approval to extend the quarry's useful

life for infill purposes. This would support land rehabilitation and provide a periodic income stream. If approved, Warrambui expects to have a 100 square metre grassed recreation area at completion of the rehabilitation process. Further details on the quarry and rehabilitation process will be provided as discussions with council progresses. While there has been provision made in trust for the rehabilitation of the quarry, the final cost will be determined as we get closer to final level of infill.

Leadership and governance

The most significant single piece of work this term was the appointment of a new Centre Director. After more than ten years of faithful service, Dean Salzke concluded his time in the role, and we welcomed Bernd Hahnert as Centre Director. We thank Dean, Anna, Noah and Josh warmly for a decade of dedicated leadership, and we are grateful for the steady transition Bernd has led. On the Board, Hannelore Patton has taken up the role of Treasurer, succeeding Teresa Heyne, whose long service we acknowledged at our last report.

Financial sustainability

The Board wishes to be plain with Synod about Warrambui's financial position: Warrambui has not yet reached breakeven following the COVID years. The audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025 report total income of \$1.545 million and total expenses of \$1.709 million, producing a deficit of \$164,530. This is an improvement on the \$210,604 deficit recorded in 2024, achieved as income growth (around 7%) outpaced expense growth (around 3%). The trajectory is encouraging, but the centre remains loss-making at the operating level noting we continue to look for efficiencies.

Warrambui has continued to depend on the generous support of the District. In 2025 the District provided an additional cash contribution of \$180,000 (2024: \$70,000), and a further \$230,000 has already been provided in the first six months of 2026. Cumulative District

contributions recognised in Warrambui's equity now stand at \$1.405 million, in addition to the District's interest-free loan of \$2.78 million. The interest-free period on that loan ended on 31 December 2025, with concessional interest applying through 2026 and quarterly principal-and-interest repayments scheduled to commence from 2027 with the intent of providing the District with a financial return on your investment in Warrambui as well as the many ministry and missional outcomes.

The auditor issued a qualified opinion for 2025. The qualification relates solely to the completeness of the fixed-asset register — a records matter the Board is remediating — and not to the operating result or the integrity of the accounts. The auditor's report also carries an emphasis of matter noting Warrambui's financial dependence on the District.

At the District Church Council's request, the Board has looked to set out a path toward viability. In summary, we believe Warrambui can move toward breakeven by making better use of our people and facilities in quiet periods, developing new revenue streams — including leadership camps, and community retreats — and maintaining disciplined cost management, all supported by a renewed marketing effort. We continue to weigh this preferred "fully utilised" model against alternative structures should progress not be demonstrated, and we are committed to transparent, regular reporting to the DCC as this work proceeds.

Thanks and looking ahead

On behalf of Warrambui — and indeed of the wider District that Warrambui exists to serve — the Board thanks the District Church Council for its significant and sustained cash flow support through a demanding period. Without it, the

ministry described in this report would not have been possible.

I also want to thank every member of the Board for the gifts and time they give so generously. We farewell Bri O'Keeffe, who steps down after several synod terms of dedicated service. Her contribution to Warrambui's governance and ministry has been considerable, and we are grateful.

We remain confident that God is not finished with Warrambui. As one of our team put it, it is the work of the Holy Spirit, invited each morning, that keeps us steadfast to live Jesus. We ask for the District's continued prayer as we press on toward a sustainable future in which yet more lives are blessed through this place.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Mason

Chair, Warrambui Board

Warrambui Financial Statements

Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the year ended 31 December 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Revenue		
Accommodation income	622,589	580,529
Program income	73,270	57,126
Catering income	725,600	710,264
Other income	123,438	96,698
Total income	<u>1,544,897</u>	<u>1,444,617</u>
Operating Expense	(27,957)	(22,926)
Accommodation expenses		
Program expenses	(1,868)	(1,907)
Catering expenses	(157,336)	(165,926)
Maintenance expenses	(109,139)	(78,961)
Other expenses	(334,024)	(311,322)
Employee benefits expense	<u>(1,079,103)</u>	<u>(1,074,179)</u>
Total operating expense	<u>(1,709,427)</u>	<u>(1,655,221)</u>
Deficit for the year	<u>(164,530)</u>	<u>(210,604)</u>
Other comprehensive income		
Other comprehensive income for the year		
Total comprehensive loss for the year	<u>(164,530)</u>	<u>(210,604)</u>

Warrambui Financial Statements

Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre Statement of financial position As at 31 December 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	552,396	557,438
Trade and other receivables	61,731	76,799
Total current assets	614,127	634,237
Non-current asset		
Property, plant and equipment	7,595,181	7,562,209
Total non-current assets	7,595,181	7,562,209
Total assets	8,209,308	8,196,446
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	324,327	307,315
Provision for employee benefits	59,073	93,577
Total current liabilities	383,400	400,892
Non-current liabilities	3,183,113	3,174,369
Trade and other payables		
Provision for employee benefits	16,800	10,660
Total non-current liabilities	3,199,913	3,185,029
Total liabilities	3,583,313	3,585,921
Net assets	4,625,995	4,610,525
Equity		
Capital contributions	2,224,061	2,224,061
District contributions	1,405,190	1,225,190
Retained earnings	996,744	1,161,274
Total equity	4,625,995	4,610,525

Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre Statement of changes in equity As at 31 December 2025

	Capital Contributions \$	District Contributions \$	Retained earnings \$	Total equity \$
Balance at 1 January 2025	2,224,061	1,225,190	1,161,274	4,610,525
Deficit for the year	-	-	(164,530)	(164,530)
Additional contributions received	-	180,000	-	180,000
Balance at 31 December 2025	2,224,061	1,405,190	996,744	4,625,995



**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE BOARD OF WARRAMBUI RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE**

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre (the Entity), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policies, and the statement by the Board of the Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the *Basis of Qualified Opinion* section of our report, the accompanying financial report of the Entity:

- (i) presents fairly, in all material respects, the Entity's financial position as at 31 December 2025 and of its financial performance for the year then ended;
- (ii) complying with the material accounting policies described in Note 2.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Yu".

ANGELA YU
Partner

Dated this 16th day of June 2026

Parramatta NSW 2150

St Pauls College, Walla Walla



Anita Morton

Community

St Paul's College continues to thrive as a rural Lutheran College community, with enrolments now exceeding 320 students, approx. a quarter of whom are boarders. Growth has supported the establishment of a third Year 7 class and reflects strong demand for Lutheran education in the Riverina region. Partnerships with neighbouring Lutheran schools remain strong through principal collaboration and shared professional learning, including the Riverina Lutheran Colleges Staff Retreat Day hosted by St Paul's in 2026.

Teaching and Learning

St Paul's remains committed to high-quality, Christ-centred education. Students continue to engage positively in learning and co-curricular opportunities, including agriculture, show team, sport, and service learning. Teaching and learning development has included the introduction of a new learning management system, greater focus on flexible learning environments, and ongoing engagement with contemporary pedagogy, grounded in Lutheran educational values and aligned with initiatives such as Free to Flourish.

Staffing and Wellbeing

The College has strengthened staffing capacity to support enrolment growth and maintain high standards of care and learning. Student wellbeing and child safety remain central priorities, supported by the Wellbeing Team, external agency collaboration, and ongoing review of systems and risk management processes.

Stewardship and Finance

St Paul's remains financially stable and continues to exercise careful stewardship of its resources. Sound financial management, disciplined budgeting, regular reporting, and audit processes support operational needs and strategic priorities. The College remains mindful of increasing sector costs and continues to take a prudent approach to long-term sustainability.

Facilities and Strategic Planning

The College has continued to progress facilities planning, including Master Plan work and grant applications for a proposed multi-purpose hall. Upgrades to dining and boarding facilities were completed, and demountable classrooms were installed to meet enrolment growth. The College has also benefited from access to a demographic planning platform, partially funded by DCC, to support evidence-informed

enrolment, facilities, and strategic planning. The 2024–2026 Strategic Plan continues to guide governance, learning, wellbeing, and facilities development, with planning underway for 2027–2029.

Mission and Community Engagement

St Paul's remains deeply committed to its Lutheran identity and mission. Worship, service learning, chapel, and strong connections with the local parish continue to support faith formation among students and staff. The College also maintains active engagement with the wider Lutheran Church and is strengthened by the ongoing support of alumni, parents, and community groups.

Future Outlook

The College faces the future with confidence and humility, encouraged by strong enrolments, committed staff, and supportive partnerships. Through careful planning, faithful stewardship, and reliance on God's provision, St Paul's College is well positioned to continue serving students, families, and the wider church community through Christian education, empowering learners to embrace the future with courage, confidence, and creativity.

Anita Morton, Principal



St Pauls College, Walla Walla Financial Statements

St Paul's College Ltd ABN: 35 128 398 336 STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the year ended 31 December 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Operating revenue	11,748,610	11,102,051
Employee benefits expense	(8,403,806)	(7,603,857)
Teaching and administration expense	(2,062,817)	(1,689,956)
Property and related expenses	(549,220)	(441,569)
Finance expenses	(53,117)	(64,758)
Depreciation / amortisation expenses	(1,031,363)	(989,366)
Bad and doubtful debts	(61,261)	(34,618)
Net trading activities	(159,794)	(137,349)
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	(572,768)	140,578
Capital income	179,786	71,631
Prior period adjustments	-	-
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	(392,982)	212,209
Other comprehensive income		
Revaluation of land and buildings	-	-
Transfers to reserves	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(392,982)	212,209



INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF: ST PAUL'S COLLEGE LTD

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a general purpose finance report, of St Paul's College Ltd, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the Committee's declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of St Paul's College Ltd has been prepared in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 31 December 2025 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- (ii) complying with relevant Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022*.

BUSH & CAMPBELL AUDIT PTY LTD
Authorised Audit Company

David Rosetta
Director

Wagga Wagga
29 May 2026

St Pauls College, Walla Walla Financial Statements

St Paul's College Ltd ABN: 35 128 398 336

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31 December 2025

CURRENT ASSETS	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	1,637,377	1,601,654
Trade and other receivables	297,090	306,543
Inventories & Biological Assets	283,666	267,186
Other current assets	136,061	103,949
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,354,194	2,279,332
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	21,625,332	21,974,539
Property, plant and equipment		
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	21,625,332	21,974,539
TOTAL ASSETS	23,979,526	24,253,871
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	792,721	588,959
Borrowings	126,041	127,430
Provisions	757,389	659,909
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,676,151	1,376,298
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Borrowings	979,380	1,045,809
Provisions	263,822	378,608
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,243,202	1,424,417
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,919,353	2,800,716
NET ASSETS	21,060,173	21,453,155
EQUITY		
Reserves	16,812,334	16,812,334
Building and Scholarship Funds	85,932	84,134
Retained earnings	4,161,908	4,556,687
TOTAL EQUITY	21,060,173	21,453,155

Lutheran Education LEVNT



Colin Minke

LEVNT Office

2025 saw a significant strategic review of LEVNT services across all jurisdictions. This involved an external partner Spark Strategy, who facilitated an extensive Value Proposition Project that sought input from all stakeholders across the region, including principals, business managers, senior leaders, NSW DCC and School Board members. The results and feedback from this project then fed into the new LEVNT strategy for 2026-2029.

One of the key learnings from this review was the need for the Office to provide more bespoke services to our schools, accounting for their size, location and context. Moving into 2026 and beyond, more focussed and deliberate support will be offered to NSW schools recognising their developmental stage and avoiding duplicating services that are offered through other agencies such as Independent Schools NSW (ISNSW). NSW schools are well placed for the future, with quality leaders and supportive Boards.

2026 School Enrolment and Financial Report

Across the NSW region, schools have generally tracked in line with 2025 budget expectations from an enrolment perspective. What is becoming clearer, however, is that the financial pressures schools are managing are becoming part of normal operations rather than short-term fluctuations. In particular, rising salary costs and more limited access to capital funding are now key considerations as schools move into 2026 and beyond.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that all schools continue to demonstrate a number of positives—particularly around enrolment stability, balance sheet strength, and their ability to meet core financial solvency requirements. See table for more information.

Enrolment Patterns

Across the NSW schools, enrolments have shown steady overall growth, increasing from **837 students in 2019 to 878 in 2026**, representing a net gain of over 40 students or **4.8%** growth across the region. While there have been some year-to-year fluctuations, most notably a dip in 2025, the broader trend has been positive, particularly from 2021 onwards. This growth has been largely driven by strong increases at Walla Walla, supported by periods of stability at Wagga Wagga and Jindera, which have provided a consistent base, while Henty continues to reflect the variability of a smaller school. Overall, this gradual uplift in enrolments provides a stronger platform for the region, although maintaining that momentum will remain important in supporting financial sustainability as cost pressures continue to build.

Lutheran School Wagga Wagga

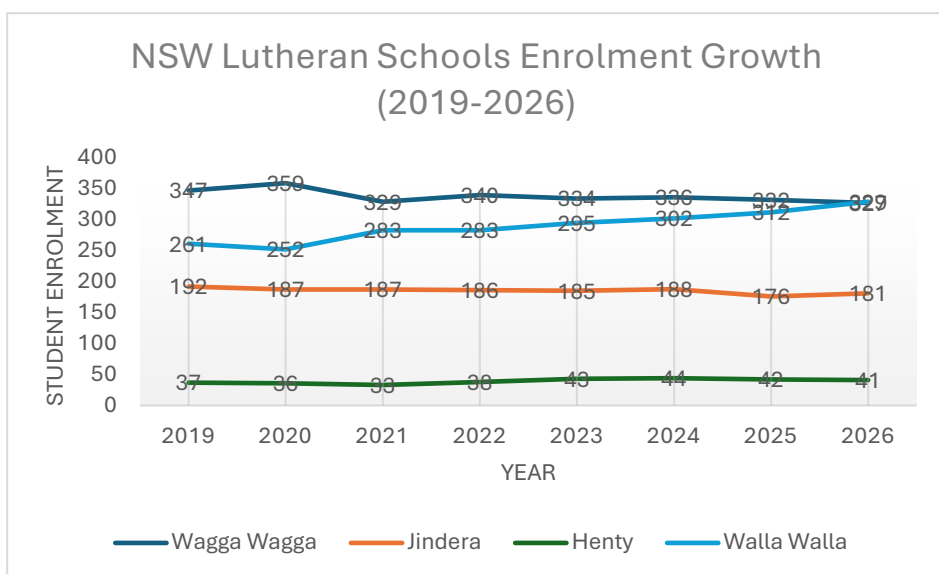
2025 was a year marked by both growth and stability for Lutheran School Wagga Wagga. After a few years of leadership change, the year began with a full and committed staff team, ready to step forward together into a renewed season of learning and development.

This sense of renewal was reflected in the development of our new Strategic Plan. Shaped through prayer, consultation, and community voice, our Mission, Vision and Values

were refreshed to reflect who we are called to be in this next chapter. Our mission, *to serve in a Christ-centred community, connected with families, nurturing students to grow in a love of learning and flourish in every part of life*, now clearly anchors our direction and purpose. It continues to guide our commitment to a holistic approach to education, where each child is supported to grow academically, socially, and spiritually.

Partnership has also been a key theme of the year. Partnership has been a key theme this year. Through a joint initiative with other Lutheran primary schools across the Riverina, our Year 6 students participated in a Leadership Day led by Emma Graetz from Australian Lutheran College. This experience equipped students with a Christ-centred understanding of leadership while strengthening connections between our Lutheran school communities. Now in its third year, we greatly value this opportunity to grow together. To further strengthen community connections, we introduced visits to a local nursing home. Students stepped beyond their comfort zones by engaging in conversation and asking questions, and the initiative has been warmly received. Many students have shared how much they value these interactions, describing them as memorable and special.

2025 also saw long-awaited progress in our physical learning environment. After many years of



planning, our refurbishment program formally began. Our Year 5 classrooms were transformed through a complete upgrade, while the exterior repainting of the school has given the campus a renewed sense of freshness and care. New heating and cooling systems in the library and resource centre have further enhanced learning spaces for students. Looking ahead, this work will continue with the refurbishment of our Year 1 and 2 classrooms, incorporating natural light and flexible design elements that bring the outside in.

Beyond the classroom, opportunities for students to flourish continued to grow. Our co-curricular offerings expanded through the evolving Clubs program, while participation in a wide range of sporting opportunities, from water polo to orienteering and the many in between, saw many students achieve success, including at a state level. Camps and excursions also remained an important part of the student experience, providing opportunities for connection, challenge, and discovery across many facets of school life.

We give thanks for a year of continued blessings. In all that we have experienced and achieved, we are reminded that God is faithful. With this assurance, we look ahead with confidence, knowing that our future as a school community rests securely in Him and are genuinely excited for what's to come at Lutheran School.

St John's Lutheran School, Jindera

I began 2025 as Interim Principal at St John's, then becoming Principal at the beginning of Term 2. This was a smooth transition, as I had been a teacher and then Deputy Principal at St John's.

2025 saw the completion of the refurbishment of our learning spaces, through funds from the Commonwealth Block Grant Authority (BGA), as our innovative Year 5/6 space was ready for use in Term 3. Each class at St John's now has multiple flexible learning spaces, providing a wide range of options for

arranging furniture to suit different learning activities and needs. We have found this has boosted student engagement in learning and pride in their school.

Our mission and ministry program further developed as we increased the frequency of Friday Night Chapel led by Peter Reed to being held fortnightly.

Peter also began a youth group that met on alternative weeks to Friday Night Chapel, ministering to teenagers who were past students of St John's but also from regional Lutheran Churches and the local community. St John's is grateful for allowing Peter to minister to our community and serve our school as Chaplain to build connections that are flowing through into Friday Night worship. Members of the Bethlehem Congregation in Jindera continued to support St John's through Friday Night Chapel, attending school events and providing breakfast for staff at our start of year spiritual retreat.

Our Little Saints Preschool celebrated its 20th Birthday in 2025. Enrolments were increased by moving to a 2-day/week offering for all families. We can now have up to 70 children enrolled. A newly formed Parents and Friends group has brought parents together to raise funds to support Little Saints and give them a greater sense of belonging. Increased enrolments contributed towards St John's being able to fill our Kindergarten class for 2026.

St Paul's Lutheran Primary School, Henty

Under the shared principal MOU between Jindera and Henty, I began 2025 as Interim Principal in Term 1, becoming Principal at the start of Term 2. I was on site every Tuesday and for school events at other times of the term.

At the start of 2025, St Paul's rolled out our new school values, based on LEA's Growing Deep and Free to Flourish dispositions. Emphasis was given to embedding these values in school life by making each one a theme for weekly Chapel worship, making them visible in classrooms

and having classes create class expectations at the start of the year based on each value.

2025 was a year of stakeholder collaboration at S Paul's Henty. A long awaited new playground was designed in collaboration with staff, students, parents and the School Board. Our P&F raises so much money at the annual Henty Machinery Field Days that they were able to make a considerable financial contribution towards the playground. A new School Masterplan was created also in collaboration with representatives from staff, school families and the School Board.

St Paul's gained 4 new enrolments throughout 2025, which is considerable considering our small size. Marketing was a major focus, aiming to put us in a position as a school of choice in our local area.

Our early childhood Christian music program, mainly music, continued running on site fortnightly, bringing a wide range of local families together for ministry, supported by volunteers from St Paul's Lutheran Church Henty and school families. We are grateful for the grant provided for this program by DCC, as it has enhanced our ability to minister through relationship building and increase opportunities to bring families into our school community for further ministry and mission.

Community is everything in a small school like St Paul's and the school was actively involved in community events and service such as the ANZAC Day Parade, students building relationships with residents at Myoora Aged Care and participation in interschool events with other schools in the area.

Colin Minke
Executive Director LEVNT



NSW Lutheran Schools – Financial Summary

2025 School Financial Summary	St Paul's Lutheran	St John's Lutheran	Lutheran School	St Paul's College
	Primary School Henty	Primary School Jindera		
			Wagga Wagga	Walla Walla
Total income from Students	71,449	582,301	1,506,793	3,683,384
Total other income	21,878	57,975	246,879	123,145
Total Government grants	951,775	2,912,865	4,428,019	7,942,081
Total Operating Revenue	1,045,102	3,553,141	6,181,691	11,748,610
Total net trading activities	-	125,479	2,147	159,794
Total Operating Revenue incl Trading Activities	1,045,102	3,678,620	6,183,838	11,588,816
Employee Benefits	790,921	2,878,479	4,629,820	8,581,716
Teaching and administration costs	122,675	401,965	667,827	2,062,817
Property and related costs	26,950	140,830	466,387	549,220
Finance costs	1,625	59,904	4,473	53,117
Depreciation expenses	90,551	312,491	338,681	1,031,363
Bad and doubtful debts	1,084	3,905	2,000	61,261
Total Operating Expenses including Interest & Depreciation	1,033,816	3,797,574	6,109,188	12,339,494
Operating Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	11,286	118,954	74,650	750,678
Capital Income	40,910	451,614	-	179,786
Capital Expenditure	143,357	685,579	282,193	682,157
BALANCE SHEET				
Current Assets				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	541,129	637,469	2,631,778	1,637,377
Total Current Assets	577,871	784,076	2,766,518	2,354,194
Non-Current Assets	-	-	-	-
Non-current Loans Receivable	-	-	-	-
Total Non-Current Assets	3,016,232	10,635,031	9,025,393	21,625,332
Total Assets	3,594,103	11,419,107	11,791,911	23,979,526
Current Liabilities	-	-	-	-
Total Current Liabilities	146,776	925,578	1,035,000	1,638,521
Non-Current Liabilities	-	-	-	-
Non-Current Capital Loans incl Finance Leases Liabilities	6,229	973,829	7,196	979,380
Total Non-Current Liabilities	16,122	1,063,365	27,564	1,458,742
Total Liabilities	162,898	1,988,943	1,062,564	3,097,263
Net Assets	3,431,205	9,430,164	10,729,347	20,882,263
Benchmarks as per Monitoring Requirements				
Primary student numbers	42	176	332	0
Secondary student numbers	0	0	0	312
Total lost enrolments	3	12	20	24
Enrolment Churn	6.8%	7.0%	6.0%	7.7%
Primary FTE teachers	4.0	11.0	19.8	0.0
Secondary FTE teachers	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.7
Student/teacher ratio - Primary	10.8	16.8	16.9	0.0
Student/teacher ratio - Secondary	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.9
Total employee costs as % of Income	73.9%	78.5%	74.9%	71.3%
EBIDA	\$103,472	\$253,441	\$417,804	\$333,802
Operating Margin (based on EBIDA)	9.9%	7.1%	6.8%	2.8%
Debtors as % of Student Income	5.2%	7.8%	0.6%	5.7%
Solvency - Cash held/Income	51.8%	17.9%	42.6%	13.9%
Interest cover	63.68	4.23	93.41	6.28
Networking capital Ratio	3.94	0.85	2.67	1.44
Loans outstanding	\$15,650	\$1,152,140	\$33,900	\$1,105,421
Loan balance per student	\$373	\$6,546	\$102	\$3,543
Debt/EBIDA to be 5 times or less	0.2	4.5	0.1	3.3

Lutheran Women NSW & ACT



**Tanna
Mackenzie**

"Women loved by God, sharing this love with others."
— LWA Theme.

2024 Events:

Annual Women's Retreat, March 15–17, at Warrambui:

Forty-two women gathered under the theme *"A Patchwork Life"*, grounded in Philippians 1:6. The weekend was blessed with beautiful weather, uplifting worship, deep teaching, and powerful times of prayer.

57th Annual Convention, at St Mark's, Dubbo, April 27: Centred on the theme *"Jesus our Pattern"* (Ephesians 2:8–10), District Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus welcomed attendees with a focus on our Lutheran identity and relationship with God. Spot speakers shared updates from LWA, ALWS, Grow Ministries, Lutheran Media, LCA International Mission, Warrambui, and St Paul's College.

Southern Region Fellowship Day at Bethlehem, Wagga Wagga, June 1: Exploring the theme *"You are shaped by God's hands"*, attendees heard powerful testimonies from the Warrambui Interns on how God has moulded their lives.

TPM Sisterhood Weekend at Warrambui, August 23–25: Fifty women explored the theme *"Precious"* (Isaiah 43:4). Pastor Maria Rudolph delivered three powerful messages: *You Are Valued*, *You Are Special*, and *You Are a Gifted Daughter of God*.

Coastal Region Fellowship Day at St Peter's, Port Macquarie, September 14: Centered on *"Pray About Everything"*, the day featured guest speakers, skits, and music, with a wonderful lunch served by the men of the congregation.

Canberra Region Fellowship Day at Holy Trinity, Turner, September 21: Approximately 50 women gathered for a High Tea featuring traditional Finnish food and an enriching presentation on Finnish Lutheran women in Canberra and the Church of Finland.

Lutheran Women of Australia (LWA) Convention at Murray Bridge SA, October 2–3: Several members attended this triennial national convention under the theme *"How Great Thou Art"*. Over the 2021–2024 triennium, Fellowship donations to LWA supporting wide-ranging LCA missions totalled nearly \$400,000.

2025 Events:

Annual Women's Retreat at Warrambui, March 14–16: Led by Jane Franke under the theme *"Beautiful Feet"* (Isaiah 52:7). Julie Krause spoke on how ALWS brings hope to developing nations, and the Warrambui interns shared their ministry experiences in Papua New Guinea. A key takeaway resonated deeply: majestic mountains proclaim God's glory, but they cannot preach the Gospel—that privilege belongs to us.

58th Annual Convention at Holy Cross, Belconnen ACT, May 3: Structured around the theme *"Walking with Jesus"* (Luke 24:32), Pastor Darren Jaensch led the opening devotions, and Cheryl Turek spoke on community development. Sabine Sloane was warmly thanked and honoured for over 20 years of dedicated service on the Executive.

Caretaker Governance Resolution
The following resolution was accepted at Convention 2025:

Due to a lack of nominations for an incoming Executive, the Convention passed a proposal appointing the existing Executive to a 12-month caretaker capacity to explore future operational options, look for new leaders, or prepare for recess in 2026. Bishop Richard Schwedes acknowledged the challenges but encouraged the women to focus on their clear blessings and alternative paths of service to women in their local communities.

Southern Region Fellowship Day at Zion, Walla Walla, June 7: Centred on *"Keeping in Step with the Holy Spirit"* (Galatians 5:13–26), with devotions by Pastor Daryl Shoesmith. Discussions were held regarding the upcoming operational decisions facing the District.

Coastal Region Fellowship Day at St Matthew's, Woy Woy, Sept 13: Centred on *"Reaching Out"*, featuring insights from local ministries where congregants volunteer, including Mary Mac's food kitchen and the Youth Life Op Shop.

Canberra Region Afternoon Gathering at Immanuel, Woden Valley, October 25: In response to lower numbers and an aging demographic, the region transitioned to an afternoon format. Twenty-six people from five congregations gathered for an *Antiques and Memorabilia Show and Tell*. Pastor Tim Muller led devotions using a 2,000-year-old clay oil lamp to illustrate Matthew 5:14–16.

2026 Events:

Annual Women's Retreat at Warrambui, March 13–15: Forty women, alongside five PNG interns and their coordinator, explored *"The Greatest Story"* under the leadership of Tanya Cunningham and Spiritual Leader Pastor Tim Muller. It was a beautiful, full-circle moment as Tanya had co-led a retreat in the iconic Dome back in 2007.

59th Annual Convention at Bethlehem, Wagga Wagga, May 23: Bound by the theme *"Under His Care"* (Psalm 95:7), attendees gathered with a mix of expectation and wonder regarding the future of the District structure. Ehrin Kerber presented a deeply moving guest presentation on the work of LCA International Mission.

The Decision to Enter Recess & Financial Stewardship

Since the 2024 District Synod, our local Fellowships have contributed \$39,368.70 to support four District projects, six National projects, and seven International Missions.

To ensure our local Fellowships can continue gathering and supporting these critical missions without the administrative burden of a formal District Executive, a historic proposal was brought forward under the guidance of Bishop Richard Schwedes.

The following motions were voted upon and passed unanimously:

- **Transition to Recess:** *The formal District structure of the LWNWSW & ACT will enter a period of recess.*
- **Establishment of Trust Funds:** *All funds currently held in the District account will be transferred to and held in a trust by the LCNSW/ACT District.*
- **Financial Oversight:** *The District Bishop be authorised to approve the spending of funds held in trust on ministry for and by women in NSWACT District following consultation with local Women's Fellowships of NSW and ACT.*

An information sheet titled "While in Recess" was distributed at the Convention, providing the practical details required to continue supporting our long-standing mission

projects. Digital or physical copies are available at this Synod through Tanna Mackenzie.

Celebrating 60 Years - May 2027

While we are entering a formal recess, the ministry to and by women in our District does not stop. Our deep friendships and local fellowships will continue.

Cheryl Turek has wonderfully volunteered to help guide us toward a special celebratory gathering in May 2027 to mark our 60th Anniversary.

We are compiling a 60-Year Celebration Book to honour the history of Lutheran Women in NSW & ACT. If you have stories, photos, or memories to contribute, please contact Cheryl at cherylturek@hotmail.com

What a distinct blessing it has been to serve on the Executive of Lutheran Women of NSW & ACT. Having been a member for nearly 40 years, this organization has truly been a second family to me and to so many others. Even though the formal District framework is drawing to a close, the love, concern, and positive spirit witnessed at our final Convention prove that our bonds in Christ remain unbroken. We rest secure knowing we are forever under God's care.

With love in Christ,
Tanna Mackenzie

Lutheran Aged Care Albury



Wendy Rocks

COMPLIANCE

The Aged Care Act 2024 or 'New Aged Care Act' ('the Act') has rewritten the compliance environment for the Aged Care sector in that compliance which was once embedded in standards and principles is now enshrined in law. In addition, civil penalties are live in cases of breach of the various regulations under the law. Included in the Act and the rules are the Aged Care Quality Standards. Numerous terms that were used have changed under the Act, and one of those is that Aged Care Registered Providers are now required to re-register rather than there being a re accreditation. The process is entirely different to Accreditation under the old Act. Change is nothing new to the sector, or to Lutheran Aged Care Albury, however, this is significant change and bedding down the activity required under 'the Act' will consume all stakeholders for at least 2 years. Lutheran Aged Care Albury is progressing well in this work of policy

creation and adjustment, training and education of all stakeholders, learning and efficiently applying new payments structures, complying with legislated care minutes for those delivering direct care and Registered Nurses, embedding the Statement of Rights (based on Human Rights), the Aged Care Code of Conduct, changes to the Serious Incident Response reporting (SIRS), and many, many more requirements under the Act.

There has been no noncompliance recorded by Lutheran Aged Care Albury, (LACA) and all services retain current registration. Re registration notices have not at this time been received for any of our services. The current registration will expire in 2028, so at some time prior to that LACA will be invited by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to commence the re registration process.

Workforce

Workforce at LAC remains stable in a difficult environment. This is due to the migration recruitment that occurred in 2023 and 2024 and the use of both an Aged Care Labour

Agreement (ACLA), and a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), to sponsor numerous care and Registered Nurse staff. It is also due to the low turnover rate of the LACA workforce. A lot of education, training and support is provided both to new staff and existing staff, and genuine love and acceptance of the diverse workforce. The 2 agreements are not easy to be granted or to maintain, and sponsorship demands a level of commitment and roster management over and above what may be considered 'normal'. I am proud of our managers, Human Resources, and staff generally for their work and nurture of each other and the workforce. Thankfully, the LACA use of agency staff, that so dominated staff expenditure for a time in 2021/22/23, is now pretty much non-existent, and the risk associated with agency use have been significantly reduced.

Upgrades and Redevelopment

The Dellacourt project concluded in late 2025 and dedication of the new builds and renovated site occurred in February 2026, attended by Bishop Schwedes from the NSW District. The

new Front of House and Wellbeing Centre now house a commercial café LACA Synod Report 2026 which is doing a good business (leased out to a commercial operator). A large Chapel and event area, stay over accommodation for resident's family and staff, leased out allied health spaces, and a commercial hairdressing salon. The whole area is a delightful hub of activity most days.

Both of our other residential homes have used significant capital over the last year to upgrade their environments, always needing to keep pace with community expectations.

LACA has also invested in Generators for all 3 homes, that automatically operate in power outages, which, with the changing climate, are more frequent and have the potential to be longer.

THE BOARD

The Board as with management, have worked hard to stay ahead of the constant flow of changes and regulatory requirements that are a feature of this sector. A new Strategic Plan was endorsed in 2024 and overarches activity until 2027- and that is almost here! Timn McInnes, the Chair retired in December 2025, and David Smith has taken up the role of the Chair. We also farewelled Ron Asquith in April this year, after many years of service to LACA both on and off the board. We welcomed Paul Vogelsang and Alan England as directors in 2025 and 2026. Both have considerable skills to bring to the board, with experience in medicine, psychiatry, and pharmacy services between them.

It remains extremely difficult to find appropriate director candidates, and especially Lutheran candidates. The requirements for Aged Care governance under the Act have strengthened, and this adds to the competency required of directors of a

large and complex business which is Aged Care.

The Board has commenced recruitment activities for the CEO position as I have notified them of my retirement at the end of the 2026 calendar year.

SUSTAINABILITY

LACA has had some hard years, coping with the Aged Care funding issues, the increasing staff costs associated with the introduction of mandated 'care minutes' and supporting the Dellacourt project over 4 years. We have, as they say, come out the other side and the organisation has proven to be sustainable.

CHAPLAINCY AND PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care team, under Chaplain David Jarman is extremely active throughout the residential homes. All team members recruited have qualifications in counselling/Psychology or a related degree, in addition to their personal faith which enhances their work in supporting families, and the residents and staff. Chaplaincy in an aged care setting is perhaps unlike any other, such as a parish setting, and is a specialty where the numbers being ministered to are generally large, and their life journey at a complex point.

Some Examples of Feedback, Collected Through the LACA QR Code Feedback System:

*"The recent changes at **Emily Gardens** have made such a noticeable difference. The home feels fresh, clean, welcoming and like a genuinely nice place for residents to live and for families to visit. The staff are knowledgeable, but more importantly, you can really see how much they care. During my visit yesterday, Kristy, Hayley and Jublin stood out for the warm and respectful way they interacted with the*

residents. Their kindness and genuine connection with the people they support was lovely to see.

After speaking with the Manager, it is also clear that he truly wants the best for both the residents and his staff. He is kind, approachable and engaging, and has helped create a service that everyone involved should be proud of."

"The help I get from everyone that works for Lutheran has always been top class" **Home Care**

"We would like to sincerely thank you for your care, guidance, professionalism and warm shown to mum whilst she was receiving care services from Lutheran. Mum would look forward to Helen and Debbie visiting and taking her on outings and for coffees. Your service gave my brother and I peace of mind that mum was cared for while dad had some time out to play golf. We are truly grateful for the compassion, respect, care and for you have showed mum.

"Thank you. We will always remember your kindness and professionalism." **Home Care**

To you and the wonderful staff who treated mum with so much compassion, caring, and dignity; Dad, Toni and I thank you so very much. We really appreciate your efforts in making Mum's final week as comfortable as they were.

You've been brilliant." **Dellacourt**

"Left on the meal tray - written on a napkin: Chicken Florentine, Sweet Potato / Apple Cinnamon. Very very nice the best salad. If I can have it every week - lovely Ted" **Yallaroo.**

Of course, we also receive complaints through this system, which are investigated and improvements made.

Wendy Rocks Managing Director



Lutheran Aged Care Albury Financial Statements



ABN 95 140 144 798

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS & OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Revenue	38,894,512	34,017,165
Expenditure		
Employee benefit	25,313,633	23,935,924
Agency and contractor expense	1,710,394	2,561,509
Resident and consumer expense	2,185,395	2,001,661
Hotel service expense	2,551,349	2,371,668
Occupancy expense	2,435,695	2,984,153
Administration expense	2,159,108	1,908,671
Loss on revaluation of investment properties	-	-
Write down of building reserve	-	-
Total expenditure	36,355,574	35,763,586
PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	2,538,938	(1,746,421)
Other comprehensive income		
Unrealised capital gain (loss) on land	-	-
Unrealised capital gain (loss) on buildings	-	-
Unrealised capital gain (loss) on financial assets	92,646	126,035
Impairment of replaced buildings - Dellacourt	(3,325,678)	(8,000,000)
Total other comprehensive income	(3,233,032)	(7,873,965)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	(694,093)	(9,620,386)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	20,287,842	10,834,212
Trade and other receivables	2,021,883	1,832,181
Total current assets	22,309,725	12,666,393
Non-current assets		
Financial assets	1,324,464	1,204,014
Property, plant and equipment	42,761,114	38,662,587
Investment property	23,888,867	23,641,095
Intangible assets	341,076	613,212
Total non-current assets	68,315,521	64,120,908
TOTAL ASSETS	90,625,246	76,787,301
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	2,213,252	1,867,746
Employee benefit	3,448,599	3,358,831
Resident Loans	49,046,357	39,720,189
Other liabilities	650,339	550,205
Total current liabilities	55,358,547	45,496,971
Non-current liabilities		
Employee benefit	643,734	613,697
Other liabilities	1,723,290	1,917,729
Borrowings	6,071,362	1,236,497
Total non-current liabilities	8,438,386	3,767,923
TOTAL LIABILITIES	63,796,933	49,264,894
NET ASSETS	26,828,313	27,522,407
Equity		
Reserves	10,443,368	10,350,721
Retained earnings	16,384,945	17,171,686
TOTAL EQUITY	26,828,313	27,522,407



ABN 95 140 144 798

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Lutheran Aged Care Albury (the company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of profit or loss, statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the Directors' Declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Lutheran Aged Care Albury is in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Act 2012, including:

- (i) Giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards - AASB 1060: General Purpose Financial Statements - Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities; the Corporations Regulations 2001; and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022.

Mark Le Cornu
MTC Advisory Chartered Accountants
PO Box 83
Kent Town, SA, 5071

Audit Partner: Mark Le Cornu

Adelaide
13 October 2025

LCANZ Bishop



**Bishop Paul
Smith**

"He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Cor 9:10-15)

Can you imagine another Scripture that celebrates the abundance of God's gifts to us, other than this extraordinary exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Christians in the city of Corinth. This passage from 2nd Corinthians 9 points to our service for the "gospel of Christ" and our sharing in this work which is continually and abundantly blessed by our gracious God. This exhortation is a good focus for our Church as we look forward to serving in the many places where we are called to be salt and light in the world, to the glory of God. "We've been given so much people, let's all share. Reaching out with open arms." (LHS 792)

In this opening section of my report to you, I want to acknowledge the Christian leadership of Bishop Richard as he exercises oversight amongst God's people both in the ACT/NSW District and across the Tasman in the LCNZ. May the guiding hand of the Good Shepherd protect, bless, enfold and abundantly inspire Bishop Richard and his wife Veronica.

DIRECTION - N E W S

In this current season of my service as Bishop in our Church, I have opened my reports to the General

Church Board and the Districts of the Church, with an acronym for the "direction" for our Church, using the four points of a compass: N.E.W.S.

N = Our Neighbours – meaning regional mission collaboration amongst Lutherans:

Key Question: How can we better participate in the mission of God expressed by Lutheran Communities across our Asia Pacific region?

In January, with our International Mission Project Officer, Erin Kerber, I attended the 35th Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. Across the Districts of this neighbouring Lutheran Church are memories, relationships, celebrations and regrets about our Interchurch partnership. Throughout the Convention, on Siassi Island, delegates came up to talk with me about the vital relationship between the LCANZ and the ELCPNG and many delegates had wonderful memories of lasting friendships with people of our Church. This Convention also acknowledged the long service of LCANZ member Gordon Samuel to the ministries of ELCPNG, particularly the fledgling Lutheran University. Pastor Murray Smith and his wife Tracey were also at the Convention. They live at Logaweng where Murray services on the faculty of Senior Flierl Seminary. Please keep Pastor Murray and Tracy in your prayers. In the city of Lae, Pastor Mick Hauser serves on the faculty of Martin Luther Seminary. Please also keep Mark and his wife Milka and their family in your praying.

In January, I also had opportunity to travel with Erin Kerber to the village of Ukarampa to spend some time with our Bible translation worker, Hanna Schultz. Hanna is diligent and disciplined in her work in the cause of the Gospel in remote communities and she welcomes your prayers.

This visit included an engagement with LCANZ member Brenton Kanowski, who serves as Australia's Consul-General in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

In this missionary collaboration alongside our "neighbours" our Church is blessed with the leadership of Pastor Mark Schultz and Erin Kerber. Please continue to pray for and to support this work as they travel across our region on our behalf flourishing our Interchurch relations with our Lutheran neighbours.

E = Ecumenical Collaborations:

Key Questions: How can we better participate in the mission of God across Christian denominations on both sides of the Tasman?

In February, I attended the Uniting Church of Australia-Lutheran Church of Australia Dialogue Team session in Melbourne which launched a study guide for the document adopted at our 2023 Melbourne Convention, "At The Table". I commend this study guide to the congregations of the Church. The February meeting included both the UCA President Charissa Suli and myself as Bishop of the LCANZ.

Our Lutheran Church is well-received by other Christ denominations in Australia and New Zealand and it is vitally important to continue prioritising these dialogues and Interchurch relations. My experience in college ministry has taught me that our younger generations in the Churches yearn to better appreciate the theological distinctions between Christian denominations whilst expecting purposeful mission collaboration between Churches.

A number of our Lutheran communities across the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia have purposeful and flourishing "MOU"s with their local Anglican and Uniting Church congregations.

W = Worship: Lutheran Identity and Creativity in Worship:

Key Question: How do we cultivate a worship culture with resources that is noticeably Lutheran in the design and witness?

Our neighbouring Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea follows historic Lutheran liturgical forms yet their culture in and around worship, including song, drama and visual arts,

is distinctively PNG. While I was in PNG, I saw great opportunity in developing deeper conversations with our Lutheran Church neighbours to better express ourselves both locally and regionally in evangelical worship that is faithful to our Lutheran confession of Christ. Bishop Andrew Brook serves as the Chair of our Commission on Worship and this Commission is exploring ways to better serve the Church with good Lutheran worship resources. Currently, the number one internet connection to the LCA NZ Webpages (with the most 'hits') is the Worship Resources page.

S = Study in Lutheran Theological Proficiency:

Key Question: How can we better develop our theological proficiency as Lutheran Christians through programming ministry education in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessional writings?

The College of Bishops in February, has received the draft version of the "Pastoral Graduate Outcomes" documentation that was developed in 2025 between Australian Lutheran College and the College of Bishops. This is a watershed document which will help students and graduates describe their learning pathways within the ALC programme as well as guiding their theological learning in formal ministry training both in what is known as "recognition of prior learning" as well as ongoing theological development "in-service".

Currently enrolments at Australian Lutheran College show:

Overall: 44 active students enrolled in units within ministry and theology courses.

Gender: 19 students are female; 25 students are male.

District breakdown of enrolments: 4 – NSW/ACT; 1 – NZ; 1 – OS; 14 – Qld; 11 – SA; 11 – Vic; 2 – WA

Reason for study: 5 GMP; 2 Discover Program; 15 SMP/C (candidates or looking to be candidates); 5

SMP/C looking to transition to GMP; 1 SMP (ordained); 2 PhD; 2 school teacher/chaplain; 12

personal/professional reasons. (from March 2026 ALC Student Census)

AUGUST WORKSHOP 2026

In its August 2025 meeting, in response to its mid-year strategic planning workshop, our General Church Board resolved to call a gathering of District and Churchwide representatives in the latter part 2026. This event is designed to be a pivotal point for the Church's preparations for the 2027 Convention.

A key matter was the Western Australia District's call for a review of the LCA NZ structure at the coming Convention, focused on how we operate as God's people in mission in the LCA NZ. The WA District has a proposal before the 2027 Convention asking for work to be completed for major resolutions before the 2030 Convention.

The primary focus on this "Symposium" will be how we organise ourselves for God's work. This event will explore pathways for good collaboration between the support and services of the Districts with the support and services of Churchwide activities.

This Symposium will also help the Church as we prepare for the work of the General Church Board following the October 2027 Convention. More than half of the current General Church Board members will finish their constituted terms of office at that Convention and will not be eligible for election.

ASSISTANT BISHOP STEPHEN SCHULTZ AS ACTING BISHOP MARCH TO MAY 2026

I thank God for the faithful service and support that Assistant Bishop Stephen have given to the churchwide bishop role, that the Lord has called him to. In particular, from mid-March to the end of May this year, he stepped in and served as acting bishop during my time of RnR leave.

SEPTEMBER VISIT FROM REVD DR ANNE BURGHARDT

We are honoured to welcome the General Secretary of the LWF, Estonian Theologian and pastor, Reverend Dr Anne Burghardt and the LWF Asia Region representative, Reverend Dr Rospita Siahaan. We have

arranged for these two guests to formally visit Hermannsburg, Areyonga and Yirara in Central Australia, as well as Adelaide and the Barossa. Their visit here in Australia from 16-21 September follows their regional meetings amongst our Lutheran neighbours in Jakarta, Indonesia in early September which I will be attending.

CHURCH HOUSE OPENING

On February 28th, we formally dedicated our new Church House which houses our LCA NZ support services as well as being the new home for Australian Lutheran College. The library for ALC is located three blocks to the north of Church House across from the University of Adelaide.

DR TANIA NELSON WITH TWO ROLES

Dr Tania Nelson has accepted an offer to serve as the implementation officer for the Way Forward Outcomes. She began her work in January and is currently ensuring that the LCA NZ website will provide diverse quality resourcing for people within the Church and outside the Church regarding the inclusion of both women and men in the Office of the Public Ministry amongst us. This is part time paid position.

Dr Nelson has also accepted the opportunity to serve as the successor to Dr Pauline Simonsen in the Advocacy Role for Women in Ministry in our Church. This is a voluntary role.

THE 2024 CONVENTION AND ORDINATION

There have been various responses across the Church, from people and congregations to the resolutions of the 2024 October Convention to admit both women and men to the Office of the Public Ministry. Some have left the LCA NZ and we grieve the loss of any sister or brother from our fellowship. The College of Bishops and the General Church Board meet monthly, and, in these meetings, they have monitored and sought to appropriately respond to the various matters that have arisen following the Convention. We cannot underestimate the extraordinary pastoral oversight that has been

exercised by our District Bishops throughout this time.

Accusations:

Some have accused the LCA NZ of departing from its confession about the Scriptures as the Word of God. The 2024 Convention clearly stated the Confession and identity of our Church continues and at every District and General Convention, we continue to declare the following:

“We accept, without reservation, the holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, written, and inerrant word of God, and as the only infallible source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine, and life.” And “We accept, without reservation, the confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church as contained in the Book of Concord.”

There has also been ongoing false witness that suggests that the “conservative faculty” at ALC were removed. ALC Principal Dr Tim Stringer has publicly and repeatedly invited anyone who has heard this or spoken this accusation to contact him to hear the truth but regrettably, people continue make the accusation without talking to him.

Dr Tania Nelson’s role is to ensure that various statements and documents of our Church on these and similar matters are available for members.

Lutheran Mission – Australia (LM-A)

As a new Church in Australia, LM-A is not the continuing LCA NZ. It is a new

Church with teaching and practice that is different to the LCA NZ and with different mission partnerships. LM-A has declined to proceed with mutual recognition between our two Churches. When offered the option of making a common declaration on the scriptures as God’s Word and on the Lutheran Confessions, LM-A representatives declared that the LCA NZ may publicly make a confession about the Scriptures as God’s Word, but it doesn’t believe that.

In Advent 2025, on behalf of the General Church Board and College of Bishops, Assistant Bishop Stephen Schultz and I published a “lament” to announce to the Church, the difficult situation we find ourselves in, with Lutheran Mission - Australia declaring that the LCA NZ is not an orthodox Church.

We continue to reach out to the leaders and people of this new Church, treating them as sisters and brothers in Christ who share our Lutheran Confession.

PASTORS AND PRINCIPALS:

Dr Martin Luther wrote in our Lutheran Confessions, that “consolation and conversation between sisters and brothers in Christ” was a way of speaking the Gospel. I encourage the people of the Church to speak the Gospel in this way, by reaching out to pastors and to school principals with conversation and consolation, to encourage these Church leaders in their Christian leadership. Remember to pray for these leaders that they might walk

confidently in the strength that the Lord gives them.

PERSONAL:

I have benefited from a time of Rest and Recuperation Leave.

During Holy Week and Easter this year, I was scheduled to travel to Jerusalem and join with our Lutheran neighbours in their Holy Week and Easter worship. This visit was postponed due to the ongoing conflict between Israel, the United States of America and Iran. Our Lutheran colleagues in Palestine were welcoming of the news that I did not simply want to be a “tourist” but a visiting bishop from a regional Lutheran Church. I have never been to the Holy Land and now, I am looking forward to the possibility of sharing with our Lutheran sisters and brothers in Jerusalem later this year.

Physically, I am going well for a man of 64 years. I am still walking and keeping my weight in check. During my time of leave, my wife Heidi and I were able to spend some time with children and grandchildren that do not live in South Australia. (Heidi likes to be known as “Granny Smith”).

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!”

Submitted in the name of Christ,

Bishop Paul Smith, June 2026



Executive Director Church Operations



Brett Hausler *Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to*

As you gather as a district under the theme of Christ’s Great Commission: Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the

the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20). The work of the LCA NZ Church Operations exists to support and enable the church’s participation in this mission.

This report provides an overview of significant developments and initiatives across the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCA NZ) during 2025 and early 2026. Together, these activities reflect our commitment to faithful stewardship, good governance, effective ministry

support and the ongoing mission of Christ’s church.

DELIVERY OF 2025 PROJECTS

1.1 Move and Investment Fund

In November 2025, Churchwide Office and Australian Lutheran College relocated to Church House at 139 Frome Street, Adelaide.

The new premises have provided a modern, light-filled and collaborative working environment that has strengthened interaction and

cooperation between staff, departments and agencies. Bringing ministry teams together in a shared location has enhanced communication and created new opportunities for collaboration in support of the church's mission.

The majority of proceeds from the sale of the former North Adelaide properties are expected to be received during July 2026. These funds will be invested strategically to strengthen the long-term financial sustainability of the church and support future ministry opportunities. The final design of the investment Fund is nearing completion with valuable input from Stephen Fogarty (NSW District Administrator) and Mark Waldren (member of the LCA NZ Finance, Audit and Risk Committee) from your district as we work with investment advisers and the LLL to implement the fund.

1.2 Local Mission Fund

The Local Mission Fund continues to encourage congregations to engage intentionally with their local communities and share the love of Christ in practical and meaningful ways.

In the February/March 2026 edition of *The Lutheran*, each of the eight congregations receiving Local Mission Fund grants shared how they intend to undertake mission within their local context. These projects reflect a diversity of missional responses shaped by local opportunities, community needs and congregational gifts.

Major grant recipients for 2026 included Living Faith Lutheran Congregation, Geelong (Vic); Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Rochedale (Qld); St James Lutheran Church, Hervey Bay (Qld); and Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Aberfoyle Park (SA). Each of these projects includes a strong focus on partnerships between congregations and schools as opportunities for community engagement.

Zion Lutheran Church, Glynde, also received significant funding to support the development of its Cross-Cultural Ministry Centre.

Local Mission Coordinator Jodi Brook continues to provide mentoring and

support to grant recipients as projects are implemented. Congregations are actively inviting the wider church to pray for their mission activities, the people they are serving and those who may come to know Jesus through these ministries.

Mission stories and prayer updates are being shared through the fortnightly eNews and other communication channels to inspire and encourage missional thinking across the church. Expressions of interest for the 2027 Local Mission Fund are now open.

1.3 Congregational Life Hub

The Congregational Life Hub, available at www.lca.org.au/clh, has now completed the transfer of resources previously housed behind the iLearn portal and across other websites. We are blessed by the volume of material that is available, however at this stage of the project, this may make it difficult for some users to locate what they are specifically seeking. Work is underway to address this, including refinement of the CLH homepage, the creation of quick links to frequently accessed pages, and improvements to the search function. We are also continuing to collaborate with District Mission Directors to transfer district-based resources that may be beneficial for wider church use. In addition, we are identifying gaps in existing resources and taking steps to develop new material where needed.

Feedback is welcomed as the Congregational Life Hub continues to be developed to best serve congregations and their leaders.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

During the 2025 calendar year participation numbers for both Level 1 and Level 2 of the Safe Church training comfortably exceeded the corresponding figures for 2024, despite face-to-face sessions no longer being available.

In relation to the live online training, which is delivered via Zoom, 94% of participants, who completed a post session survey in 2025, rated the training as either 'Highly Valuable' or 'Mostly Valuable'.

Before the phasing out of face-to-face training there were concerns

expressed about the perceived impersonal nature of interacting online, as well as about whether there was a sufficient level of technological literacy in the church to accommodate the change. Importantly the feedback received, together with completion rates, now suggest that the transition has been effective.

At the time of preparing this report, since its commencement in 2025, the Safe Church Service Desk has closed 6,342 tickets. (There are 28 open tickets.) The data reflects the focus of the team has on endeavouring to resolve issues quickly.

Although there is always scope for further improvement, we would assess the transition over the last year or so, to the restructured Professional Standards, as having been successful.

The need for safe church training remains an important focus area for the church to provide a safe place for vulnerable people. At the synod we will be sharing details of the national redress scheme and the implications this has for the church and therefore the need to have appropriate arrangements in place.

LCA INSURANCE

3.1 LCA Valuation Program

The LCA valuation program for churches for 2025 has now been completed. The exercise was undertaken by our appointed valuer. If your church has not been revalued within the past two years, a revaluation will be undertaken in 2026.

Updated valuation reports will be issued by LCA Insurance to each church that participated in the 2025 program in due course. These revised values will also be adopted for the 2026–2027 insurance renewal period.

Accurate disclosure of building values is essential to ensure appropriate insurance coverage and to mitigate the risk of underinsurance. Failure to provide correct valuations may result in a substantial reduction in claim payments or, in some circumstances, the denial of coverage altogether.

3.2 Renewal of the Insurance Program

LCA Insurance has commenced preparatory work for the renewal of the insurance program for the 2026–2027 period. Thank you for completing the insurance questionnaire from our broker, Aon, in early March 2026 as this is a key aspect in obtaining renewal terms.

Preliminary market feedback indicates stable conditions, and we remain optimistic that there will be no significant increases in premiums across the program for the upcoming renewal period.

CHURCH WORKERS SUPPORT

4.1 LCA Payroll

Following the approval from GCB to replace the end-of-life Preceda software with Employment Hero (EH), we worked with an implementation team to work on fulfilling the LCA business requirements. This included the custom writing of LCA Pastor Stipend as well as ensuring all the modern awards used across LCA were installed.

The sub-project of adjusting the employee payroll period to in arrears for compliance with Fair Work Australia guidelines for time records was undertaken while still in Preceda with support options offered to employees to minimise possible financial impact of moving from one week in arrears with one week in advance to two weeks in arrears.

The target go live date of first pay in October was extended by the EH implementation team, and despite their attempts to push the go live date to December, the LCA project team pushed hard with a resulting go live the first pay period of November 2025. LCNZ also went live with EH and LCA Payroll.

The difficulty in adapting EH compliance-based processes to produce outcomes supportive of LCA work practices and pay day expectations became an observable challenge in the first pay run. Additionally, the payroll team faced the challenge of adapting the new EH

data into old Preceda orientated documents.

Out of cycle payments by electronic funds transfer were kept to a minimum through the team's grace-based approach towards people who hadn't submitted timesheets and to approvers who hadn't approved timesheets.

The commencement of EH as the LCA Payroll software is a continuous improvement activity into 2026 as we look for improvements in productivity and further improvements on compliance with Fair Work Australia rules.

4.2 Congregational Ministry Reviews

Minor congregational reviews are available online, with a new major congregational review process developed for use by District Bishops that includes a set of tools for use by congregations, pastors, and facilitators. These are important tools to help facilitate regular discussions between pastors and their congregations regarding expectations.

4.3 Wellness and Support Program

Empatia was engaged to provide a wellness and support program and uptake in the services available has been greater than the previous provider with in the main good reviews from users. In 2025, 239 hours of counselling services were provided across LCA. In addition to the wellness and support services Empatia conducted a psychosocial hazards identification survey, the results of which are due mid-2026.

FINANCE

The stewardship of financial resources remains an important part of supporting the church's participation in God's mission. The 2026 budget reflects a significant commitment to mission-focused ministries and projects, including: Local Mission Fund grants, International Mission, Finke River Mission, formation and training of

church workers through Australian Lutheran College.

The budget also provides substantial support for pastors and church workers through transfer fund payments, graduate pastor vehicle grants, vehicle loans and pension housing loan programs.

These investments reflect the church's commitment to equipping leaders, strengthening congregations and supporting ministries through which the gospel is proclaimed.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the work of the past year, we do so in the light of Christ's Great Commission. The initiatives described in this report exists to serve the church's calling to make disciples. While many of these functions are operational in nature, they provide the foundations that enable congregations, schools, pastors and ministry leaders to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

We give thanks for the many staff, volunteers, church workers and leaders who contribute faithfully to this work. Their service, often undertaken quietly and behind the scenes, helps equip the church.

Above all, we take confidence not in our plans or systems, but in Christ's promise to his church: *Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* Encouraged by that promise, we continue to look forward with faith, seeking to be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us and willing participants in God's mission. The staff of Churchwide Office continue to pray for the congregations, ministries and people of this District. We thank you for your partnership in the gospel and ask that you also remember us in your prayers as together we serve Christ and his church.

Brett Hausler, Executive Director of Church Operations



LLL



Karen Pienaar

LLL Australia (LLL) and our mission-hearted customers continue to come together in partnership in the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory District to advance Christian mission and ministry.

Together, we have enabled schools to inspire young people with new facilities, aged care homes to provide comfort for the elderly, and congregations to continue sharing the Word of our Lord and Saviour. These achievements would not be possible without the trust and generosity of our investors and borrowers. In turn, LLL's strong financial stewardship over the past century continues to underpin our ability to deliver 'Finance with a mission'.

It is the strength of this partnership that enables us to support grassroots projects that make a difference in local communities in the NSW & ACT District through our grants, bursaries, sponsorships and loans.

We look to the future with confidence and gratitude as we extend this

legacy, with a focus on working together with congregations and communities to advance Christian mission and ministry.

LLL Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2025

See table below.

Recent highlights include:

- **Transition to Religious Charitable Development Fund (RCDF) completed**

In March 2025, we completed our transition from an Authorised

Deposit-taking Institution (ADI) to a Religious Charitable Development Fund (RCDF), so that we could continue to serve our missional purpose of supporting the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ).

- **Leadership transition**

Our previous CEO Ross Smith resigned in August 2025 to return to Sydney to live and work to support his family. We are so very grateful to God for the provision of Ross and his experience, leadership and dedication as we navigated the transition.

Karen Pienaar took a leave of absence from the LLL Board to act as interim CEO while a national recruitment search was undertaken. Karen was successfully appointed to the role on a permanent basis in November.

- **New investment products***

Our suite of purposeful investment options now includes:

- A 31-day Notice of Withdrawal Facility
- An Instant Access Facility (for eligible investors)
- Term Investments with four tenures – 31 days, and 3, 6, and 12 months - with premium interest rates.
- The Charitable Facility, which enables LLL customers to financially support Christian organisations and projects close to their heart.

- **New loans approved**

During the 2024-25 financial year, LLL approved \$50.11m in loans to support organisations that commit

to a great purpose of community transformation, including \$885k in the NSW & ACT District.

- **Mission in action**

During the 2024-25 financial year, LLL provided \$1.4m in missional financial grants throughout the LCA at a congregation, school, district and churchwide level. This includes more than \$780k in Permanent Fund allocations to local and international mission projects.

- **Telling our story**

Providing up-to-date stories of the power of our missional partnership, LLL launched the *Mission Matters* webpage, and quarterly digital newsletter, to give our mission-hearted customers and supporters real world examples of the meaningful impact their purposeful investments with us enable.

Platinum Partnerships

We were delighted to strengthen our long-standing relationships with Lutheran Youth of Queensland (LYQ) and Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) with Platinum Partnership agreements in 2024. These five-year partnerships will support LYQ and ALWS as they continue their vital work in pursuit of our shared missional goals.

Grow connected, hope-filled people

Our strategic collaboration with LYQ aims to magnify our collective impact for the benefit of young people as they continue on their spiritual journeys. Both LLL and LYQ hold a deep-seated belief in the inherent worth and unique potential of every individual. LYQ's mission centres on nurturing and guiding young lives towards their full potential through rich experiential learning, intentional

LLL Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2025

	Number of facilities	Value held	Total number of borrowers	Total Loans	New loans approved	New loans approved value
National	9,975	\$690,670,785	83	\$366,389,655	18	\$50,110,000
NSW-ACT	599 (6%)	\$51,762,290 (7.5%)	5 (6%)	\$10,871,057 (3%)	1 (5.5%)	\$885k (1.7%)

support and engagement with the Christian faith.

Celebrating ALWS' 75th anniversary

ALWS began 2025 with a bold goal to celebrate their 75th anniversary by supporting 75,000 children in need with the essentials for a happy, healthy life - food, school and safety. We launched the LLL \$75k Matching Appeal in support of this wonderful goal, with all donations matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$75,000. This target was reached months ahead of the forecast end of the initiative.

In addition to the \$75k Matching Appeal, we proudly supported ALWS Ambassador Boot Camps for teachers from Lutheran schools and Walk My Way fundraising events.

Loans in the NSW & ACT District

LLL collaborates to meet the organisational needs and objectives of Lutheran entities. A loan from LLL allows borrowers to fulfil their missional goals, build strong Christian communities, and become sound financial stewards for the future. We are for purpose, not profit. All our profits go back into mission, financial sustainability and fulfilling our constitutional objective being 'for the benefit and advancement of the Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church bodies.

LLL is proud to partner with Lutheran schools, aged care/retirement facilities and congregations across Australia. We invite a conversation about your funding needs and how we can support you with our suite of competitively priced investment options.

Examples of projects undertaken with the aid of a tailored LLL loan include:

- **Lutheran Aged Care Albury** completed an extensive renovation of its Dellacourt facility with the aid of an LLL loan. The four-and-a-half-year project was officially opened in February 2026 and now boasts a range of brand-new amenities including a chapel, hairdressing salon, café, a wellness centre, commercial kitchen, and a welcoming reception area.
- **Victory Lutheran College, Wodonga**, is undertaking a

construction program with the aid of an LLL loan. The project will further enhance the growing college's first-class, award-winning facilities.

LLL School Bursaries

LLL School Bursary Grants continue to assist students in gaining a Lutheran education; students who otherwise would have been precluded due to financial hardship.

These bursaries allow Lutheran schools across Australia to financially assist students in gaining an education that nurtures a reputable Lutheran culture of care.

The first grants were awarded in 2021 and LLL has committed \$1m to schools over seven years.

LLL Camping Ministry Grants

The LLL Board's commitment to youth ministry continued with \$125,000 being awarded across the five Church districts annually (2023-2025). These grants aim to give young people the opportunity to attend Christian camps for the first time and to financially assist returning patrons, allowing more young people to connect with each other in fellowship and rejoice in the Word of God.

Furthermore, the Board has once again extended this same financial commitment annually for a further three years (2026-28), to support the spiritual journey of our young people around Australia.

Sponsorships

During the reporting period, LLL's sponsorship agreement with LEVNT continued to facilitate the placement of School TV on district school websites.

School TV is a website pool of resources that provides the school with content to develop students' confidence. It includes support for schools while educating parents through videos, blogs, and articles from wellbeing industry specialists. Topics include screen time use, blended families, loss, diet and nutrition, managing depression and anxiety, and more.

It was also our great pleasure to sponsor the 7th Australian Conference on Lutheran Education (ACLE) as

'Flourish' Principal Partner. Our display, with a stunning tree feature, complimentary coffee cart, and giveaways, was a popular meeting place during breaks in the engaging and dynamic convention program centred around the theme of 'Free to Flourish'.

LLL Mission Outreach Grant

LLL Mission Outreach Grants (MOGs) are allocated each year for district-approved mission outreach programs. The MOG awarded in the NSW-ACT District in 2024/5 supported a project that has had a profound impact on ministry in the Port Macquarie region:

St Peter's Lutheran Church –

With the support of a \$25,000 LLL Grant, the growing congregation undertook a project to expand a small, covered area to the rear of the Kemp Street church to give current worshippers more room, and to welcome new members.

The purpose-built area was blessed by NSW-ACT Bishop Richard Schwedes at a ceremony in August 2025.

"We are thankful to LLL, and the NSW-ACT District for partnering with us as we work together to inspire people to live a purposeful life and growing together in Jesus Christ," congregation Treasurer Garth Schultz said.

Our Mission Outreach Grants (MOGs) empower Christian communities to take a step of faith toward the change they want to create. Since the program's inception in 2010, we have awarded over \$1.3 million in missional funding to grassroots projects nationwide, thanks to our customers' investments.

In 2025, we announced that our MOG program will continue (2026-28), providing \$25,000 for the NSW-ACT, Vic-Tas, and WA districts and increasing to \$50,000 for the Queensland and SA-NT districts to meet increased interest in congregational outreach growth in these areas.

Regular Electronic Giving (REG)

LLL continues to administer the LCA REG program, enabling congregation

members to maintain their financial support to their local church.

Donation Platform & QR Codes

We can provide QR codes for congregational giving, project fundraising and other donation activities. This form of giving allows visitors to give freely to your congregation or mission activity without the need for cash

Charitable Donation Program*

The newly launched LLL Charitable Donation Program connects people

who want to support Christian ministry and community initiatives with organisations faithfully seeking sustainable funding. It's a practical way to use your investments to support Christian ministry, mission and community outreach; helping churches, schools and organisations continue God's work in tangible and meaningful ways.

Advancing Christian mission and ministry across Australia is at the heart of everything we do at LLL. We can only do this through your support;

your money invested with us, and your shared commitment to the growth of the ministry of the Lutheran Church.

Yours in Christ
Karen Pienaar
CEO, LLL Australia



ALWS



Michael Stolz

In a world of growing need, your faithful generosity is inspiring. Thank you for remembering those who suffer and imagining yourselves alongside them.

YOUR FAITH EXPRESSED IN ACTION

Through ALWS, your generosity is expressed in practical care, dignity and hope for people facing some of the world's most difficult circumstances. A full report is outlined in our 2024-2025 Annual Report - [ALWS Annual Reports](#)

Highlights during our last reporting period (18mths; Jan 2024 to June 2025)

- 273,235 people supported in 12 of the world's poorest countries
- \$11.9 million contributed by supporters and the Australian Government for humanitarian relief, development and community education
- Rapid responses to 11 emergencies, assisting 19,287 people affected by conflict or disaster.

Through ALWS, you help families overcome poverty through education, essential services, livelihoods and farming support, with priority given to children, women, older people, people with disability and marginalised communities.

Your generosity has supported sustainable development projects in South Sudan, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar & Indonesia.

In Papua New Guinea, you work through a church partnership program with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG to improve family wellbeing, disability inclusion, health training and leadership development.

During the reporting period, you also helped families affected by floods, earthquakes, landslides, conflict and displacement, providing emergency supplies of food, water and shelter as well as sanitation, dignity kits and psychosocial support.

PROTECTING PRECIOUS GIRLS

In many of the communities where you work through ALWS, poverty and insecurity increase the likelihood that girls are married too young; ending their education and placing their health and wellbeing in serious danger.

In February we launched the PRECIOUS campaign with the goal of protecting 1,000 girls in danger of child marriage by Mother's Day.

As part of this campaign, our church welcomed Mary Obara, Program Manager for LWF Kenya Somalia, to Australia. Mary shared how your support helps girls stay in school, keeps them safe and strengthens whole communities. Across three weeks, Mary spoke at 21 events in

four states, sharing with over 1,700 Lutherans.

Good News! Our ALWS family responded with incredible kindness and generosity so that 3,000 girls could be protected!

If you missed the opportunity to see Mary in person, you can watch a recording here - [PRECIOUS Asante Event Video](#)

EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Your support also helps ALWS form compassionate, globally aware communities here in Australia. Through advocacy partnerships with Micah Australia and ACFID, ALWS helps raise awareness of Australia's role in addressing global poverty and injustice. You also support our work in Lutheran schools helping students grow in compassion and understanding. In 2025, ALWS engaged 10,084 students and teachers across 50 Lutheran schools. We also shared updates with church groups, delivering 84 presentations to 5,852 church members in 2025.

WALKING TOGETHER

Community action remains a central way that Australian Lutherans live out their faith through ALWS.

Last year more than 4500 Australians stepped out a Walk My Way event across the country, including at Sydney Walk My Way in November. Together our church raised \$291,151 to support vulnerable children in need. Walk My Way is a wonderful

public expression of our church's love in action.

THREE NEW WAYS YOU CAN BRING LOVE TO LIFE:

Just One Hour: Donate an hour of your wage each month to help families build sustainable livelihoods. Matched 5:1 by an Australian Government Grant. This increases your impact SIX TIMES! Discover more - www.justonehour.org.au

Community-based Refugee Settlement in Australia. Your congregation can provide practical care and support to newly arrived refugees. This is a ministry of hospitality and practical care. Discover more - alws@alws.org.

Living Water Legacy Fund. Our new legacy fund preserves the value of your gift and uses the interest in perpetuity to care for the most vulnerable. Discover more - alws@alws.org.

STEWARDSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND TRUST

ALWS is committed to faithful stewardship, strong governance and transparent reporting. We maintain full DFAT accreditation and, over the past five years, have directed an average of 83.8% of funds to programs supporting vulnerable communities.

In January 2025, ALWS transitioned to Australian Lutheran World Service Limited and adopted a 30 June

financial year, further strengthening accountability and alignment with government and sector standards.

Through ALWS, you continue to bring love to life; protecting girls, supporting families, educating communities and responding to crisis with compassion. Thank you for your prayers, generosity and partnership.

Michael Stolz
ALWS Executive Director



*Australian
Lutheran*
World Service

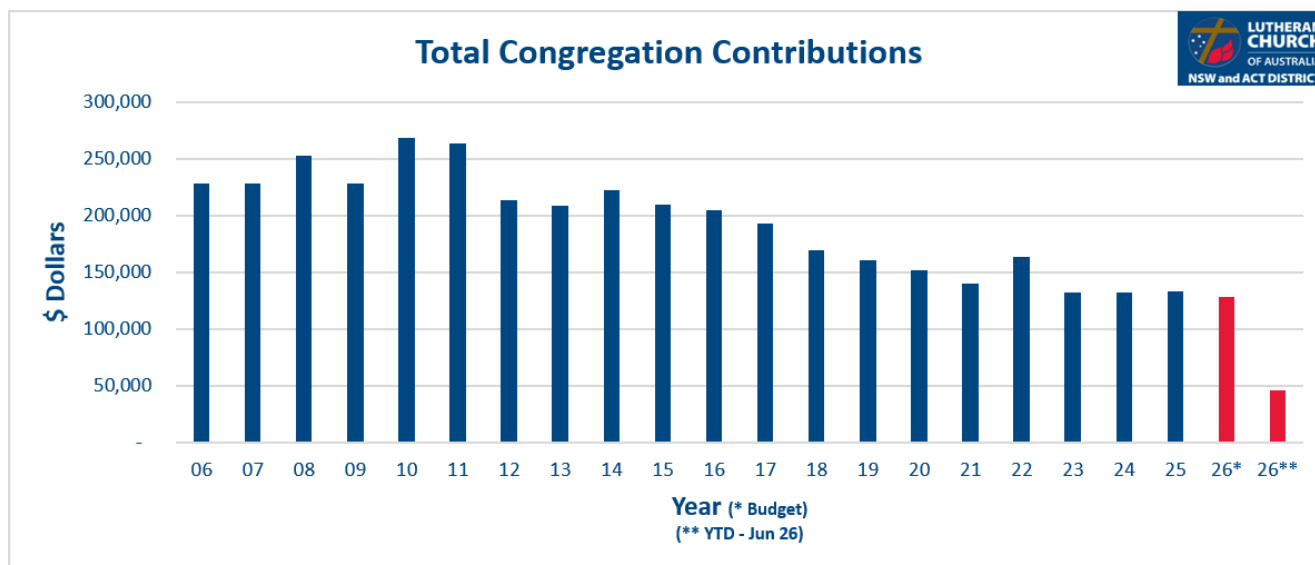
District Property Trust

449	12-Jan-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
450	20-Feb-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2024 Grants
451	12-Apr-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
452	31-May-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL Interest Income Received
453	20-Jun-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
454	20-Jun-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2024 Grants
455	1-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received LLL 12 Month Term Investment Maturity
456	1-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received LLL 12 Month Term Investment Maturity Interest @ 4.36%
457	5-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL Transfer - District Acquires of 7% Southern Cross Bass Hill Finnish – Church/Manse, 23 Sevenoaks Cr Bass Hill
458	10-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
459	25-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2024 Grants
460	25-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfers LCA Contribution
461	25-Jul-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL Transfer to Acquire of Bishop's Automobile
462	11-Sep-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
463	11-Sep-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2024 Grants
464	11-Sep-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received proceeds from Divestment of 21% of Investment Portfolio
465	29-Jun-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL. Received Franking Credits from ATO on Investment Portfolio
466	1-Oct-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
467	28-Nov-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds for Warrambui Cashflow Support (To Capital)
468	28-Nov-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2025 Grants
469	28-Nov-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfers LCA Contribution
470	28-Nov-24	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
471	10-Jan-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
472	13-Feb-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds for Warrambui Cashflow Support (To Capital)
473	4-Mar-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
474	4-Mar-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfers LCA Contribution
475	19-Mar-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Receipt of Principal - St Pauls College Loan
476	7-Apr-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 12 Month Term Deposit @ 4.60%
477	7-Apr-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 12 Month Term Deposit @ 4.60%
478	7-Apr-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 6 Month Term Deposit @ 3.85%
479	10-Apr-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
480	20-May-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer to Acquire High Yield Investment Shares
481	22-May-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer to Acquire High Yield Investment Shares
482	26-May-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer to Acquire High Yield Investment Shares
483	31-May-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL Interest Income Received
484	5-Jun-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
485	5-Jun-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2025 Grants
486	5-Jun-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds for Warrambui Cashflow Support (To Capital)
487	12-Jun-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL - District Acquires of 6% Southern Cross Bass Hill Finnish – Church/Manse, 23 Sevenoaks Cr Bass Hill
488	9-Jul-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
489	9-Jul-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds for Warrambui Cashflow Support (To Capital)
490	10-Jul-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
491	14-Jul-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfers LCA Contribution
492	19-Aug-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds for Warrambui Cashflow Support (To Capital)
493	1-Sep-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
494	1-Sep-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2025 Grants
495	11-Sep-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 12 Month Term Deposit @ 3.60%
496	11-Sep-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 6 Month Term Deposit @ 3.50%
497	11-Sep-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 6 Month Term Deposit @ 3.60%
498	11-Sep-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 3 Month Term Deposit @ 3.25%
499	7-Oct-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received LLL 6 Month Term Investment Maturity
500	7-Oct-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received LLL 6 Month Term Investment Maturity Interest @ 3.85%
501	9-Oct-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
502	10-Oct-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer to Acquire High Yield Investment Shares
503	24-Oct-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL. Received Franking Credits from ATO on Investment Portfolio
504	9-Dec-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Capital Account for 2025 Grants
505	9-Dec-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer of Funds to LLL Working Account for Operations
506	11-Dec-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received LLL 6 Month Term Investment Maturity
507	11-Dec-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Received LLL 3 Month Term Investment Maturity Interest @ 3.25%
508	12-Dec-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Income Distributions from Investment Portfolio Received
509	16-Dec-25	NSW and ACT District – Property Trust Account LLL, Transfer Funds to LLL 12 Month Term Deposit @ 3.60%

Contributions from Congregations

Congregation	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026*
ACT Belconnen	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
ACT Canberra	500	-	1,000	500	500	-	1,000	500
ACT Canberra Finnish	1,000	2,000	-	-	2,000	1,000	2,000	1,000
ACT Canberra Estonian	150	-	300				-	
ACT Queanbeyan	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
ACT Tuggeranong	15,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
ACT Woden	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
CN Central Coast	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
CN Lifeway Epping	7,000	7,000	7,000	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200	8,200
CN Narraween	2,000	2,000	-	4,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
CN Port Macquarie	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
CN Coffs Harbour	500						-	-
CN Sydney	6,000	7,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
CN Sydney Indonesian	1,500	2,000	2,500	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
CS Bass Hill	1,200	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
CS Campbelltown	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
CS Illawarra	2,000	1,000	1,200				-	-
CS Liverpool	3,000	-	-	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
CS Springwood	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
CS St Marys	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	500	500	500	500
CS Sutherland	4,000	4,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
CS Sydney Estonian	-	-	300	150	150	-	150	-
NW Dubbo	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
NW Forbes	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
NW Gilgandra	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
NW Orange	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
NW Parkes	1,600	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
NW Tamworth	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
NW West Wyalong	1,500	-	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
R Albury	8,335	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
R Alma Park	3,000	6,000	3,500	8,500	200	200	200	200
R Bethel	250	150	150	150	-	-	100	150
R Burrumbuttock	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
R Culcairn	5,500	6,000	4,000	4,000	500	500	500	500
R Griffith	1,000	-	3,000	1,000	1,000	3,000	4,000	1,000
R Gerogery	4,000						-	500
R Henty	6,500	3,250	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
R Jindera	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	10,000	10,000
R Lavington	-	1,000	500	500	500	500	500	500
R Leeton	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
R Milbrulong	1,200	-	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
R Pleasant Hills	1,000	1,000	-	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
R Temora	-	7,500	8,000	8,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
R Wagga Wagga	7,500	7,500	-	15,000	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500
R Walla Walla	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Totals	160,735	151,400	140,150	163,200	132,250	132,600	132,850	128,750
Actual to 30 June 2026								40,403
* Budget as prepared Q4 2025								

Contributions from Congregations



Anniversaries and Pastor Changes

Anniversaries

27 Oct 2024	100 years	Zion Walla Walla church building
23 Mar 2025	75 years	ALWS
14 Sept 2025	40 years	Springwood church building
26 Oct 2025	100 years	Wagga Wagga congregation
14 Dec 2025	70 years	St Marys church building
2 Aug 2026	40 years	St Peters Port Macquarie

Ordinations

9 Nov 2025	Pr Bruce Flanagan	Liverpool & Sutherland
30 Nov 2025	Pr Jacob Traeger	Molonglo Valley Church Plant

Installations

28 July 2024	Pr Richard Schwedes	NSW and ACT District Bishop
1 June 2025	Pr Nich Kitchen	LifeWay Epping
1 June 2025	Pr Mat von Stanke	LifeWay Newcastle (re called)
10 Aug 2025	Pr Mark Worthing	Port Macquarie & Frontier (re called)
31 Aug 2025	Pr Mark Simpendorfer	Springwood & St Marys
9 Nov 2025	Pr Bruce Flanagan	Liverpool & Sutherland
30 Nov 2025	Pr Jacob Traeger	Molonglo Valley Church Plant

Accepted calls out of District

Dec 2024	Pr Mark Schultz	Epping to LCA Assistant to the Bishop – International Mission
4 May 2025	Pr James Leach	Central West NSW to Caboolture Qld
26 Apr 2026	Pr Sahat Simanullang	Sydney Indonesian (GKIA) to Indonesia

Resignation

June 2026	Pr Christian Fandrich	Burrumbuttock Parish
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Retirement

August 2026	Pr Ian Rentsch	Strategic Directions Facilitator
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Roll of District Pastors

LCA Parish Pastors	<i>Parish location</i>	<i>Pastor</i>	<i>Installation Date</i>
	Albury and Lavington	Pr Will Frost	4 Feb 2024
	Belconnen	Pr Darren Jaensch	7 May 2023
	Canberra Finnish	Pr Janne Pekkarinen	4 Sept 2011
	Canberra/Queanbeyan	Pr Gabor Szabo	17 Jan 2010
	Cooma	Pr Melvin Salzke	13 Feb 2010
	Henty	Pr Darryl Shoesmith	26 Feb 2023
	Liverpool	Pr Bruce Flanagan	9 Nov 2025
	LifeWay Epping	Pr Nich Kitchen	1 June 2025
	Chinese	Pr Francis Leung	27 Nov 2022
	Illawarra		
	Newcastle	Pr Mathew von Stanke	3 Feb 2019
	Port Macquarie	Pr Mark Worthing	17 July 2022
	Springwood	Pr Mark Simpfendorfer	31 Aug 2025
	St Marys	Pr Mark Simpfendorfer	31 Aug 2025
	Sutherland	Pr Bruce Flanagan	9 Nov 2025
	Temora/West Wyalong	Pr Darren Kupke	8 Feb 2015
	Wagga Wagga	Pr David Cherry	23 Jan 2022
	Walla Walla	Pr John Borchert	13 Aug 2023
	Woden Valley	Pr Tim Muller	1 Nov 2020
	Molonglo Valley	Pr Jacob Traeger	30 Nov 2025

Vacant Parishes

Burrumbuttock
Central Coast
Central West
Gulgandra/Dubbo
Sydney Finnish
Sydney/Narraweena
Tuggeranong

Vacant Parishes not in the Call Process

Campbelltown
Gunnedah/Tamworth
Leeton/Griffith

District Pastors			
	District Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes	28 July 2024
	Albury Aged Care	Pr David Jarman	18 Dec 2022
	LCA Assistant to the Bishop		
	International Mission		
	(residing in NSW)	Pr Mark Schultz	Feb 2025
	Pastor without a call	Pr Allan Taruste	1 Jan 2026

Emeriti

Pr Haydn Blaess	Pr Rex Mickan
Pr Arpad Breglec	Pr Dennis Obst
Pr John Grosse	Pr John Simboras
Pr David Grulke	Pr David Thompson
Pr Robert Hamann	Pr Ren Tschirpig
Pr Bruce Hohnberg	Pr Fred Veerhuis
Pr James Janetzki	Pr Gordon Watson
Pr Gary Kenney	Pr Clem Zanker
Pr Ian Kotzur	

Summary 2026

Parish pastors	17
District pastors	3
National Church pastor	1
Emeriti	17
Total District pastors	38
Parishes vacant	7

NSW and ACT District Statistics

	Baptised members				Communing members				Attendance per week				Total Income			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
Albury	125		149	151	109		122	120	50		45	61	177,393		185,482	155,900
Belconnen	105	105	107	115	80	80	93	102	46	59	64	64	254,434	203,295	217,229	222,869
Bethel	22	22	22	22	13	13	16	15	22	25	26	25	17,061	22,160	22,851	25,174
Burrumbuttock	19	19	19	14	17	15	18	13	29	23	23	22	15,328	35,382	26,344	31,690
Gerogery	31	25	25	25	24	20	20	20	31	22	20	20	25,827	32,733	35,315	31,258
Jindera: Bethlehem	36	36	49	49	29	38	38	36	29	32	34	31	53,136	96,051	92,666	86,907
Burrumbuttock	108	102	115	110	83	86	92	84	111	102	103	98	111,352	186,326	177,176	175,029
Campbelltown	32		34		32		34		19		18		84,021		71,208	
Canberra Finnish	200		60		50		45		24		25		114,436		144,749	
Queanbeyan	4	5	6	6	4	4	6	6	4	6	8	7	19,402	15,918	18,144	16,523
Reid	38	30	31	30	37	30	31	30	22	25	26	26	66,975	111,336	122,156	95,513
Canberra / Queanbeyan	42	35	37	36	41	34	37	36	26	31	34	33	86,377	127,254	140,300	112,036
Central Coast	53	51	48	23	39	25	38	23	16	15	12	13		41,937		63,235
Orange		12				10			7	7				5662		
Forbes				8				8	6			6				8,025
Parkes									24							
Central West																
Cooma									6							
Coonabarabran																
Dubbo									25							
Gilgandra	8		12	9	8		12	9	6		11	9	10,188		4,403	5,400
Nyngan																
Dubbo/Gilgandra																
Culcairn	18		17	16	18		17	15	15		16	15	27,393		32,758	31,208
Henty	156			60	84			60	50			48	101,283	101,283		136,401
Pleasant Hills									6							
Henty																
Lavington	58		61	62	53		41	53	35		31	29		113,605		90,648
LifeWay (Epping/Chinese/Il-awarra/Newcastle/Westside)				175				135								550,840
Griffith				15				15	20			9				10,950
Leeton									12				7659			
Leeton/Griffith			16				20				10				12,303	
Liverpool	46	38	34		44	36	32		22	20	17		78786			
Port Macquarie	56	74	80	78	47	66	69	69	39	47	59	51	57,822	123,790	114,111	167,273
Springwood		43	48	46		38	32	46		21	19	23		54,087	53,400	61,562
St Marys	18			46	18			46	11			19	20,597			28,248
Sutherland	74	63	62	62	42	36	36	30	15	15	14	15	73,289	69,384	96,324	85,001
Narraweena	36				20				12				101,237			
St Paul's Sydney	152		150	60	74		70		34		30	30	149,941		187,836	234,819
Sydney Finnish	100	92			81	78			20	29			79,875	65,991		
Sydney Indonesian			40				90		75							
Gunnedah																
Tamworth	24	20	25	19	13	15	16	11	11	12	13	10	8,370	7,849	8,145	9,221
Tamworth / Gunnedah																
Temora	190	185	187		97	97	97	97	58	61	62	65	105,399	146,743	159,022	268,221
Tuggeranong	81	71	83	55	72	55	79	47	46	35	42	38	204,467	163,963	177,902	177,686
Milbrulong	25	25	31	31	22	22	24	20	12	10	8	9	6,616	6,676	7,019	6,918
Wagga Wagga	126	119	93	93	94	97	61	78	55	48	51	52	203,102		216,046	
Alma Park	67	67	52	53	54	54	39	39	26	27	26	26	45,573	42,123		50,333
Walla Walla	107	98	98	91	101	84	92	74	49	50	39	38	92,229	87,072	119,051	135,466
Walla Walla	174	165	150	144	155	138	131	113	75	77	65	64	137,802	129,195		185,799
West Wyalong	21	19	18	17	17	15	15	15	12	11	11	11	9,727	8,051	7030	6462
Woden Valley	202	207	216	214	167	174	176	179	80	98	90	103	297,754	348,691	401,999	351,209

For Statistics tables please note:

- Empty spaces shows no Statistical Return received or no detail filled in Statistical Return.
- For some totals (eg parish) missing figures need to be taken into account.
- Average attendance is for per week where 52 or more services were held during the year, or per service for those who had less than 52.
- A 'communing member' is a member who communes at least twice a year

District Roll of Parishes, Pastors, Congregations and number of Delegates

Parish	Pastor	Installed	Congregation	Members	Delegates
Albury	Pr Will Frost	4 Feb 2024	St Luke	120	2
Albury Aged Care	Pr David Jarman	18 Dec 2022			
Belconnen	Pr Darren Jaensch	7 May 2023	Holy Cross	102	2
Burrumbuttock	vacant		Trinity, Bethel	15	1
			Holy Cross, Burrumbuttock	13	1
			St Peter, Gerogery	20	1
			Bethlehem, Jindera	36	1
Campbelltown	vacant		Good Shepherd	34	1
Canberra Finnish	Pr Janne Pekkariinnen	4 Sept 2011	Trinity, Watson	45	1
Canberra/ Queanbeyan	Pr Gabor Szabo	17 Jan 2010	St John the Baptist, Queanbeyan	6	1
			St Peter, Reid	30	1
Central Coast	vacant		St Matthew	23	1
Central West	vacant		St Peter, Orange	10	1
			St John, Forbes	8	1
			St Paul, Parkes	24	1
Cooma	Pr Melvin Salzke	13 Feb 2010	Trinity	15	1
Dubbo/Gilgandra	vacant		St Mark, Dubbo	27	1
			St John, Gilgandra	9	1
			<i>Nyngan</i>	5	
Gunnedah/Tamworth	vacant		Trinity, Gunnedah	6	1
			St Paul, Tamworth	11	1
Henty	Pr Darryl Shoesmith	26 Feb 2023	St Stephen, Culcairn	15	1
			St Paul, Henty	60	1
			St John, Pleasant Hills	17	1
Lavington	Pr Will Frost	4 Feb 2024	St Peter, Lavington	53	1
Leeton/Griffith	vacant		St Paul, Griffith	15	1
			St John, Leeton	17	1
LifeWay	Pr Nich Kitchen	1 June 2025	LifeWay Epping,		
	Pr Mat von Stanke	3 Feb 2019	Chinese, Newcastle,	135	2
	Pr Francis Leung	27 Nov 2022	Illawarra		
Liverpool	Pr Bruce Flanagan	9 Nov 2025	Living Waters, Liverpool	32	1
Port Macquarie	Pr Mark Worthing	17 July 2022	St Peter's	69	1
Springwood	Pr Mark Simpfendorfer	31 Aug 2025	Our Saviour	46	1
St Marys	Pr Mark Simpfendorfer	31 Aug 2025	St Pauls	46	1
Sutherland	Pr Bruce Flanagan	9 Nov 2025	Good Shepherd	30	1
Sydney Chinese	<i>In recess</i>		<i>Sydney Chinese</i>		
Sydney/Narraweena	vacant		Redeemer, Narraweena	19	1
			St Paul, Sydney	60	1
Sydney Finnish	vacant		Southern Cross, Bass Hill	78	1
Sydney Indonesian	vacant		GKIA, Yagoona	90	1
Sydney Pakistani			Jalal Evangelical		1
Temora	Pr Darren Kupke	8 Feb 2015	Trinity	97	1
Tuggeranong	vacant		Good Shepherd	47	1
Wagga Wagga	Pr David Cherry	23 Jan 2022	Bethlehem, Wagga Wagga	78	1
			Milbrulong	20	1
Walla Walla	Pr John Borchert	13 Aug 2023	Salem, Alma Park	39	1
			Zion, Walla Walla	74	1
West Wyalong	Pr Darren Kupke	8 Feb 2015	Immanuel, West Wyalong	15	1
Woden Valley	Pr Tim Muller	1 Nov 2020	Immanuel, Woden	179	2
	Pr Jacob Traeger	30 Nov 2025	<i>Molonglo Valley Church Plant</i>		

District Delegates – Summary Totals

Total Lay Delegates:	48
1 delegate per 100 communicant members or part thereof with maximum of 3 from any one congregation. (Members based on the latest Statistical Return received for each congregation)	
Total District Pastor Delegates:	20
All District Pastors on Active Call	
District Church Council lay members:	6
Additional non-Parish Delegates:	5
(per 2022 LCA NSW and ACT District Constitution)	
· Albury Aged Care Board Chairperson · St Paul's College Principal · St Paul's College Board Chairperson · Warrambui Board Chairperson · District Administrator	
Emeritus Pastor Delegates:	< 3
(maximum of 3)	
Quorum:	40
Per 2022 Resolution: The quorum at convention shall consist of any number of delegates greater than one-half of the number of elected lay delegates, Church Council members, and members of the ministry on active call. (BL7.2.6)	

Year and Location of Synodical Convention and Pastors' Conference

Year	No.	Convention / Pastors' Conference location	Year	No.	Convention / Pastors' Conference location
1966	Const.	Temora	1988	21st	Epping / Wahroonga
1968	1st Regular	Strathfield / St Pauls Sydney	1989	22nd	Parkes
1969	2nd	Henty	1990	23rd	Lavington / Yackandandah
1970	3rd	Parkes	1991	24th	Tuggeranong / Warrambui
1971	4th	Wollongong	1992	25th	Warrambui
1972	5th	Jindera / Burrumbuttock	1994	26th	St Paul's Sydney / Randwick
1973	6th	Canberra	1996	27th	Dubbo
1974	7th	Epping	1998	28th	Wagga Wagga
1975	8th	Wagga Wagga / Temora	2001	29th	Belconnen / Warrambui
1976	9th	Homebush / St Marys	2003	30th	Dubbo
1977	10th	Temora / West Wyalong	2005	31st	Newcastle / Maitland
1978	11th	Walla Walla / Henty	2007	32nd	Warrambui
1979	12th	Newcastle / Gosford	2009	33rd	Warrambui
1980	13th	Albury / Jindera	2011	34th	Henty
1981	14th	Wollongong / Oak Flats	2013	35th	Warrambui
1982	15th	Woden Valley / Warrambui	2014	Special Synod	Belconnen
1983	16th	Henty / Warrambui	2015	36th Regular	Warrambui
1984	17th	Gosford / Maitland	2017	37th	Warrambui / Woden
1985	18th	Gilgandra / Dubbo	2019	Special Synod	Warrambui
1986	19th	Belconnen / Warrambui	2020	38th Regular	Walla Walla / Albury
1987	20th	Jindera / Wagga Wagga	2022	39th	Warrambui / Belconnen
			2024	40th	Wagga Wagga
			2026	41st	Warrambui

Close of Convention

Bishop: The word of God will not fail to do what he plans for it;

Assembly: it will do everything he sends it to do.

Bishop: We are Christ's witnesses

Assembly: to the ends of the earth.

Bishop: He has chosen and appointed us to go and bear fruit —

Assembly: fruit that will last.

Bishop: He is with us always,

Assembly: to the very end of the age.

Bishop: The Lord be with you

Assembly: And also with you

Bishop: Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you for the help and guidance of your Holy Spirit during this convention. Grant to your church your Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from heaven, so that your word may not be restricted but may spread widely and bring joy by building up your holy people. Keep us firm in faith and active in love, as we carry out what we have decided; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Assembly: Amen.

Bishop: Lord God, our Father, as you kept Abraham and Sarah in safety throughout the days of their pilgrimage, as you led the children of Israel through the midst of the sea, and as you led the wise men to the infant Jesus by a star: Protect and guide us as we now set out to travel, keep us safe in your care, give us grace to serve you faithfully, and bring us at last to our heavenly home, where you live and reign with your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Assembly: Amen.

*Bishop: I now declare this convention closed,
in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.*

Assembly: Amen.

Bishop: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Assembly: Thanks be to God.



