

Proposal to change the status of the provisional parish of Cobbitty to a parish

(A report of the Wollongong Regional Council.)

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to propose that the Provisional Parish of Cobbitty be classified as the Parish of Cobbitty.

Recommendation

2. The Wollongong Regional Council recommends that the provisional parish of Cobbitty be classified as a parish with effect from 1 January 2020.

Support of the Wollongong Regional Council

3. On 11 June 2019 the Wollongong Regional Council resolved to support the request that the Provisional Parish of Cobbitty be classified as a parish under the *Parishes Ordinance 1979*.
4. The Wollongong Regional Council certifies that all procedural requirements under clauses 4 and 6 of the *Parishes Ordinance 1979* have been complied with.

Parish Information

Particulars of all church trust property

5. Founded in April 1827 by Rev. Thomas Hassall, the Parish has four much-loved, heritage buildings:

Heber Chapel (1828) - 330 Cobbitty Road

6. The Heber Chapel, consecrated by Rev. Samuel Marsden in 1828, served as the original church building of the Parish. It also served as the Cobbitty Schoolhouse until 1908. Despite its age, the Chapel has been well maintained. It is still a very functional building and is used 6-7 times per week by various ministries.



St Paul's Church (1842) – 330 Cobbitty Road

7. Designed by John Verge, St Paul's is a restrained Gothic style sandstone building with spectacular stained-glass windows and an historic William Davidson Pipe Organ (1876). Since becoming a Provisional Parish in 2014 we have: installed a new slate roof and sandstone cross atop the spire; repaired the bell tower; upgraded the audio-visual system and installed a 10-foot ceiling fan. Overall the building is comfortable, functional and in good repair. The only exception to this is the uneven timber floor, which is the next item on our maintenance list. The Church has a seating capacity of 130 people, however due to the layout, it feels full at 90 people.



The Rectory (1871) – 335 Cobbitty Road

8. The Rectory is a beautiful sandstone home set on 3.5 acres across the road from the Church. It has many historic features such as servant’s bells, pressed-tin ceilings and a fireplace in every room. The Parish has done a marvellous job of bringing the Rectory up to modern standards of comfort whilst maintaining the heritage style. With four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a study and a formal drawing room for ministry meetings, it well and truly meets the rectory standards specified by the Diocese.



Church Hall (1886) – 336 Cobbitty Road

9. Since its construction in 1886, the Parish Hall has been a hub of activity for the Cobbitty community. It is currently used 10-12 times each week by different community and ministry groups (the weekly Sunday night congregational dinner is pictured to the right). We have successfully received numerous Local, State and Federal grants for improving the facilities. As such, the hall is remarkably comfortable for a building of its vintage.



Land holdings

10. Thanks to a generous bequest from Rev. Thomas Hassall upon his death in 1886, the Parish has approximately 116 acres of land, both north and south of Cobbitty Road. The vast majority of this land is zoned ‘Primary Production’ and is leased to local graziers or to Teen Ranch. The location of the Parish landholdings and lot numbers are indicated on the attached map.

Churchyard Cemetery

11. St Paul’s is surrounded on all four sides by an active cemetery and columbarium. The cemetery is approximately 90% full, with around 100 reserved and 30 unreserved plots. The Columbarium wall is approximately 60% full, with 115 reserved and 165 unreserved niches. At present, the Cemetery is providing around \$30,000 of income for the Parish each year.
12. All of the Parish land and property is owned outright, with no debt owing.

An estimate of the number of households within the parish boundaries claiming Anglican affiliation

13. The chart below shows a 30-year snapshot of past and projected population figures within the Parish boundary. It is worth noting that 70% of current parishioners live outside the Parish.

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Population	900	1700	1900	2800	6500	12,800	18,700
People claiming Anglican Affiliation	300 (33%)	500 (30%)	600 (31%)	750 (26%)	1,500 (~23%)	2,600 (~20%)	3,700 (~20%)

An estimate of the size of the congregation

14. The Parish has two congregations: a 9am traditional prayer-book service; and a 5pm contemporary service with children’s program and after-church dinner. There are exactly 200 regular Sunday attenders on the Parish Roll: 155 adults; 26 youth; and 19 children. The table below shows the average weekly attendance at each service since Cobbitty became a Provisional Parish in January 2014.



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
9am	55	71	83	75	71	73	69
5pm	29	29	26	28	36	43	67
Total	84	100	109	103	107	116	136

A summary of the parish's financial standing

- The audited Financial Statements for 2018 show the Parish in a strong financial position, with \$56,619 cash on hand; \$38,386 in a 3-month term deposit and \$642,077 in their ACPT Client Fund. At the end of 2018, the balance sheet showed Total Assets of \$22,302,335 and Total Liabilities of \$8,865.
- Total Income for 2018 was \$287,628 and Total Expenditure was \$296,763. The table below shows budgeted and actual congregational offerings since the Parish became a Provisional Parish.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Budget	\$112,300	\$130,110	\$153,440	\$165,873	\$180,367	\$201,500
Actual	\$119,302	\$133,775	\$153,975	\$164,185	\$171,625	

- 2019 marks the 192nd anniversary of the Parish. The Parish is grateful for the rich heritage of their buildings, the faithful ministry of the saints who have gone before, and for the sustaining grace of the Lord Jesus who has upheld his church throughout the generations. Being classified as a full parish will be a tremendous encouragement to those who have toiled long and faithfully to bring the Parish to where it is today.

For and on behalf of the Wollongong Regional Council.

PETER HAYWARD
Bishop of Wollongong

11 June 2019