

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

(A report from the South Sydney Regional Council.)

Initiation of Proposal

1. A proposal was made to the Synod by the Curate-in-Charge and the churchwardens of the provisional parish of St Nicholas Coogee to change its status to a parish under clause 4(1)(b) of the Parishes Ordinance 1979 (the ordinance)

Details of meeting

2. The South Sydney Regional Council met on 22 August 2007 to consider the proposal under clause 5 of the ordinance. Council certified that all requirements under clauses 4, 5 and 6 have been complied with and recommends that the provisional parish of Coogee becomes a parish from 1 January 2008.

Proposal

3. The proposal is to change the provisional parish of Coogee to the parish of Coogee.

4. The provisional parish has applied for this change of classification following the steady growth in membership, ministry and Christian maturity in recent years.

Parish information

Background

5. This year provisional parish of Coogee will celebrate 120 years of Christian ministry from this site, being founded in 1887. The rectory was built in 1907.

6. Like many suburban churches, the ministry flourished from the 1950s to the 1970s and slowly declined thereafter. It was only at the end of the 1990s that the question of amalgamation with an adjoining parish fell off the agenda. The major issue of decaying heritage buildings remained.

Recent achievements

7. The Rev. Craig Segart joined the provisional parish as an assistant minister to the rector of South Coogee in 1998. In the following years there was slow but steady growth in both the numbers and the ministries. Additional finance was needed and obtained. St Nicolas', Coogee became among the first parishes to launch KidsPlus and so a children's ministry grew which overflowed into Sunday morning activities.

8. In 2001 the provisional parish won a significant grant from the Vision 2001 Appeal Fund. This allowed it to do major remedial work on the church and hall, and install facilities in the hall that were more conducive to ministry.

9. In 2003 the provisional parish employed a part-time children's ministry leader (with a seeding grant from South Sydney Regional Council) which further strengthened those ministries, making the church more accessible to families. In 2005, with the help of a grant from MU Sydney, this position was increased to full time. In 2004 the 'St. Nic's Playroom' commenced and that has now become the growth generator of the church.

10. Congregational participation in the matters of faith has grown over recent years. The 2006 NCLS data showed that 60% of people claimed 'much growth' in faith in the past twelve months, 60% read the Bible everyday or most days, and 60% are in small groups. There are five mid-week Bible studies and a large uptake of daily bible reading notes. Several of these results are close to double those of five years ago.

11. NCLS also show that St. Nicolas', Coogee is a good place to be. 55% of respondents have invited a friend to church in the last 12 months, 90% say it is easy to make friends at the church and the provisional parish also had a high percentage of respondents (29%) who are newcomers to church returning after a long absence or who never regularly attended.

12. While over the last 5 years there has been an 18% growth in the attendance, and in 2006 the combined average attendance (two services) was 78 adults and 19 kids, we have seen a fall in 2007 as members move from the area and the evening service was closed.

13. The parish will employ a Children's Ministry leader and have employed an evangelist to capitalise on the mission opportunity present by St Nic's Playroom. This twice-weekly Christian playgroup attracts up to 180 children and adults, most of whom attend a Christian music, Bible story and craft session.

46 Supplementary Report of Standing Committee & Other Reports & Papers

14. While each new staffing position and building issue has brought the usual financial challenges that have stretched the church's budget and faith, the provisional parish has always maintained a full 10% of its income to be given to missions.

These days

15. In view of the above deepening and strengthening of Christian maturity of the congregation and our ministries, St. Nicolas', Coogee is now a small church with a very solid platform.

Future plans

16. About the time of Synod the new full-time children's ministry leader will have commenced. The dream is that the ministries under this person's leadership will flourish to the point that those families who now choose Sunday morning sport over Sunday church will change their minds

17. At the time of writing St. Nicolas's Coogee is seeking to employ a Relational Evangelist and music leader. The dream is that these gifts put to use within our existing ministries will significantly impact the local area for Christ. And it is intended to tackle on-going issues of heritage buildings maintenance, asbestos roofing as well as expand the functionality of our hall. Of course finance is to be raised to fund much of this ministry and building work. However, God has not disappointed in the past so the provisional parish leadership is confident in him for the future.

Staff

18. The parish staff consists of –

Minister – The Rev Craig Segart

Student Ministers – Brian Hall, Marc Lorbach (each 1 day per week)

Children's Ministry Leader – Liz Duffil (from September 2007) (full time)

Relational Evangelist & music leader – vacant (30 hours per week)

Administrative Assistant – Dorothy Cohen

Demographic facts & figures

19. The 2006 Census shows that Coogee has a population of around 18,500 (a proportion of whom live in the Parish of South Coogee), of whom 15% claim to be Anglican. Many of these are 'prodigals' whom we want to pray back into the life of faith. Half the population are in the 25-54 age bracket and half have never been married, both figures well above National averages. 20% of the population live in houses and 72% in units, almost the direct opposite of the National averages.

Details of Church Trust Property

20. Details of property held by the ACPT on behalf of the Provisional Parish are:-

	Insured value	Condition
Church	\$5,509,000	Good
Hall	\$1,196,000	Good
Rectory	\$1,118,000	Reasonable
Land	\$1,870,000	

Summary of consolidated receipts and payments

21. A summary of the finances over the last three years is as follows:-

Income	2004	2005	2006
Offerings & Ministry	65,128	79,979	96,928
Donations for Parish	11,927	35,236	42,895
Donations for others	6,035	5,938	2,819
Special services	4,600	2,898	1,470
Grants	25,583	15,502	9,154
Finance income	1,496	2,507	3,104
Insurance claims	225	1,290	0
Activities surplus	44,397	0	0
Property income	31,797	33,228	35,046
Fund raising income	15,263	15,784	13,116
Total Income	206,451	192,362	204,532

Expenses			
Staffing & Cost Recovery	94,348	113,208	123,069
Resources for ministry	10,495	15,191	12,631
Parish donations	34,943	55,171	59,760
Parish Administration	9,803	12,910	8,143
Property Expenses	9,096	8,659	12,777
Improvement projects	1,972	-16,993	-16,295
Extraordinary expenses	-3,310	0	0
Other expenses	2,818	3,074	0
Surplus to Parish accs.	44,242	0	5,358
Total Expenses	204,407	191,220	205,443
Surplus/Deficit	2,044	1,142	-911

22. The Provisional Parish has no outstanding loans and is in a sound financial position.
23. The Bishop of South Sydney and the Archdeacon of South Sydney strongly support this application

Recommendation

24. The South Sydney Regional Council recommends that the provisional Parish of Coogee be reclassified as a parish with effect from 1 January 2008

For and on behalf of South Sydney Regional Council.

DERYCK HOWELL
Regional Archdeacon

28 August 2007