

Proposal to reclassify the status of the provisional parish of Cranebrook

(A report from the Western Sydney Regional Council.)

Proposal

1. A proposal was made to the Archbishop by the minister and churchwardens of the provisional parish of St Thomas' Cranebrook under clause 4(1)(b) of the Parishes Ordinance 1979.

Details of Meeting

2. An extraordinary meeting of the Western Sydney Regional Council conducted by email on Friday 3rd August considered and approved of the proposal under clause 5 of the Ordinance.

3. The Western Sydney Regional Council certifies that all procedural requirements under clauses 4 and 6 of the Parishes Ordinance have been complied with, and recommends that the Synod raise the status of the provisional parish to parish.

Proposal

4. The proposal is to change the provisional parish to a parish.

Parish Information

Past

5. Cranebrook Anglican church was planted in the early '30s on rural land along Cranebrook Road between Penrith and Richmond. In the early '80s suburban development of the area began, but it was soon realised that the church was always going to be on the *periphery* of this future development. Through the initiative of the Rev Richard Nixey and a number of committed servants, the church was moved through the 'Vision for Growth' program to the *centre* of the suburb of Cranebrook.

6. As a branch church to Cambridge Park, ministry began in June 1987 at the new facility in Callisto Drive, with an average Sunday attendance of 55 adults, and a budget of nearly \$40,000 p.a. Growth in this new centre was not without it's challenges – large Housing Commission; highly transient new housing area; frequent changes in leadership; and a struggle to keep youth and therefore mature families. As a result, after 10 years numbers & finances were unchanged, but grant funding for the centre was dwindling. Richard Goscombe was employed at the end of 1997, and ordained deacon shortly after. In the following five years the church embraced the need not only to become viable as a church community, but mature enough to support the progress of gospel ministry into the expanding local area.

7. The support given by St. Paul's Cambridge Park was certainly tested during this time. Rev John Reid's commitment to parent St. Thomas' to a position of viability was crucial, and at the end of 1998, St. Paul's commissioned a number of it's members to be part of the ministry & mission to Youth & Young Adults in Cranebrook, which planted the current Night Church congregation. This has been instrumental in the development & growth of St. Thomas'.

8. The move from infancy to adolescence was recognised on 1 January 2004, when St. Tom's was declared a Provisional Parish. Numbers had doubled, offertories trebled, and comprehensive & integrated ministry has been established within the church, together with significant outreach and evangelistic programs in the local community. Many rejoiced to see the fruit of God's faithfulness through many servants.

Present

9. Now, in 2007, we continue to rejoice to see the growth from a heavily grant dependent branch church, to a viable, maturing centre of ministry with two full-time¹ & two part-time workers, and two vibrant congregations committed to reaching Cranebrook for Christ. There is now an average of 140 adults (+50 children) attending each Sunday at:

- Morning Church: 80 adults (+ 50 kids)
Focus: Young families
- Night Church: 60 adults
Focus: Youth/Young adults

¹ Our full-time assistant, Steve Carlisle, began in 2005 through a Regional grant. If St. Toms makes budget in '07, we will be covering 2/3rds of all expenses associated with this position.

10. The parish staff consists of –
- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Senior Minister: | Richard Goscombe |
| Stipendiary Lay Worker: | Stephen Carlisle |
| Parish Youth Worker: | Garry Anderton |
| Administrator: | Annette Sheen |
| Church Secretary: | Val Beresford |
11. Many of the core initiatives of the last 10 years remain and continue to be built upon:
- Integrated mid-week groups from:- Playgroup >> Jatz (Juniors at Tomz) >> SPY (Senior Primary Youth) >> FNL (Junior Youth Group) >> Stuff (Senior Youth Group) >> YABS (Young Adults Bible Study groups x2) >> Adult Bible Study Groups (x13) >> Next Layer Ministry (just starting under Jim South's leadership)
 - TBWA (Tom's Big Weekend Away) is preparing for its 9th edition, and 90% of the congregations attend this important time of teaching and fellowship.
 - GNW (Good News Week) and Carols In The Park continue to gain large attendance and broad community acceptance each year. Good News Week has just finished for the 8th time, and has been vital in seeing St. Tom's gain the awareness & trust of the local community that must happen for successful gospel proclamation. It is an annual week of mission that represents an essential part of taking the gospel to Cranebrook. It incorporates:
 - A growing number of mid-week events now drawing 1,000 kids, through Kids Club; Sports Clinics (AFL, NRL, Soccer); Craft Club; Fishing Clinic; Dance Clinic; and Theatre Sports.
 - On the Saturday, the Family Funday is the largest event, drawing more than 5,000 people. As this is only advertised within Cranebrook it gives us great contact with a significant percentage of our local community.
 - The climax of the week is on the Sunday with Church In The Park & Church In The Dark, which do not draw the numbers of the Saturday, but do draw more and more people each year that have come to trust us enough to want hear what we have to say about Jesus. Al Stewart spoke this year (we get our TBWA speaker to speak at GNW the following year), and we saw people converted and convinced they needed to hear more through Lifeworks, etc.
12. This week of Mission forms part of *Tom's Logic* for each year:
- Term 1 – Mission prep, culminating with GNW, where over 90% of the church is directly involved in this week of intensive gospelling within our local community.
 - Term 2 – Lifeworks, where those who have been reached are involved in this teaching evangelism for 7 weeks. In 2007 we have just welcomed 35 guests, (of whom 22 did 4 or more weeks of the course). This represents a huge commitment by the church to feed and serve over 110 adults/children on site each night of the program.
 - Term 3 – J4S (Just For Starters) represents a basic discipleship course which sees at least 50% of those who start Lifeworks continue to look at the Bible together and become established in Christ. This year 18 of these have already committed to start this course shortly.
 - Term 4 – Begins with TBWA which for many of these new Christians is the first experience of the whole Tom's Church family together. Amazingly, unscarred by the experience, many take their place in church and Bible Study groups during this term. The year comes to an end with their first experience of taking the gospel to the community with Carols In The Park.
13. These things do not represent all that goes on a Toms², but they do indicate why we have come to be known in the community as Cranebrook's "local church". Ten years ago, only 5% of the community

² Other things that we run are: Scripture in 5 local Primary schools & the main High School, a regional Kidzone camp (for kids in Yrs 3 to 6 – in conjunction with Youthworks); a comprehensive program of Men's & Women's ministries with a central focus on KMC & KWC & PTC; Emergency Relief program; and we have just started our 'Next Layer' ministry (40-80+). The parish also supports missions within & outside Australia (Parkers sent from Tom's with Wycliffe; CMS; BCA; Tafe/Uni ministry).

knew where we were – today, that figure is closer to 75%. This significant move into the ‘mindspace’ of our community, and the trust gained through repeated contact & interaction has created a steady stream of newcomers each week to church and regular mid-week groups. It is our prayer that these newcomers will be among those who do Lifeworks in 2008.

14. A core part of St. Tom’s vision is to establish a strong *culture* that Christianity is not a ‘spectator sport’. The many adults converted in the last 7 years (as well as our maturing kids & teens) are heavily engaged in ministry and mission, and cannot imagine any other response to the Gospel. There has been not only conversion growth, but growth to maturity in many, resulting in an increasing number of people equipped for leadership. This has formed one of the essential ‘building blocks’ for sustained growth that would take St. Tom’s from *adolescence* to a church that can take on the responsibilities of *maturity*.

Future

15. **Cranebrook** forms the hub of a vast amount of new housing to be developed over the next 20 years in the north Penrith area with the construction of approximately 8,500 homes that has just commenced.³ It is vital that we are able to provide an effective ministry to these families as they move into the area.

16. St. Thomas’ is the **only** protestant church with a building and demonstrable presence in this area.⁴ This, together with the future population growth through these local housing developments, represents a huge responsibility and a precious opportunity for the Gospel, which is not to be missed.

17. A central goal within our current 5 year plan (’03-’07) has been to see the church grow to a point of maturity, whereby it is able to become a *parent* church itself - planting and supporting new ministries in these expanding local areas through *their* infancy, until they in turn become viable church communities.

18. **Castlereagh** is currently a small branch church in the parish of Cambridge Park. However, to evaluate Christ Church on the basis of numbers alone, would fail to see the vibrancy of this small church community. Weekly services shared by a committed & faithful 15 members, are supplemented with an all-church mid-week Bible Study group, who recently shared in 40 Days of Purpose with St. Thomas’. Education Week & Carols services are held annually and have been embraced by the local community, and Scripture takes place in the small local Primary school (with support from Toms’ members).

19. Castlereagh was the original church in this district, nearly 180 years ago, and was responsible for the planting & parenting of churches such as St. Stephen’s Penrith. It is vital that we continue to support the ministry and prayers of it’s members, especially as the new housing developments outlined above will have a direct bearing upon it’s LGA. At the right time a whole new generation of ministry will see this church community ready to thrive again. St. Thomas’ is committed to the necessary support & nurture of Christ Church, and it’s future ministry to Castlereagh in the gospel. As we have been supported to become a viable centre of ministry, so we want to support the development of ministry in Castlereagh. We are ready to take on this challenge. This boundary change to include Castlereagh will be the subject of a future proposal to Regional Council.

Conclusion

20. St. Thomas’ has come to a point where, not just on the basis of numbers & dollars, but in the key areas of ministry framework; congregational maturity, leadership, and commitment to the mission & ministry of the Gospel, it is ready to move from *adolescence* to accept the responsibilities required of an *adult* church community, as we move forward to foster the spread of the gospel in Cranebrook & Castlereagh. We respectfully seek your recommendation to do so.

Particulars of Church Trust property

21. In order to create the building blocks for growth, leadership recognised that development of the site was crucial.⁵ The two main parts to this development of our physical resources were:

- the purchase of an off-site Rectory, that would allow the redevelopment of the existing on-site Rectory.

³ Media focus has been given to the ADI area (immediately east of Cranebrook), and yet few realise that the development of Penrith Lakes (#1) and Environs (#2) is as large an area of future growth as the ADI site. This Lakes development has seen the first houses constructed this year. Combined with the soon-to-begin Nth Cranebrook development (#3), Cranebrook represents a more significant area of development than the ADI project.

⁴ The 2001 ABS gives a total population for the area of Cranebrook as 14,000 people.

⁵ It was recognised that growth in the first 10 years at Callisto Dr. had been obstructed by a ‘glass ceiling’ caused by the lack of space for children’s ministry in an area whose core demographic was young families.

- This was accomplished with the purchase of a rectory standard property 150m from St. Thomas' in 2004, at 9 Gambia Place, using a Unit Trust structure to raise the capital from within the church membership.⁶
- The existing on-site Rectory underwent a \$200,000 renovation to incorporate:
 - a Ministry Centre (2 large meeting rooms with kitchenette);
 - an Administrative Centre (3 offices, including the main church office); and
 - a 1 bedroom Apartment (completely separate, able to house another worker).

This large renovation was completed at a cost to St. Toms of only \$12,000 from offertories, via the generous donation of time, materials & expertise from members & friends of Toms. It was opened at our Annual Launch Service for 2007 on 3 February, and has represented a tremendous asset to the growing ministry of St. Thomas'.

- the acquisition of adjoining land to establish a separate *Multi-function Centre* (for children's & youth ministry activities).

22. Details of property held by the Property Trust upon trust for the provisional parish are as follows: (All properties are located at the corner of Callisto Drive and Moxham Street Cranebrook):

		Land	Building	Contents	Totals
St Thomas	Church	700,000	560,000	55,000	1,315,000
	Ministry Centre		180,000	25,000	205,000
	House	200,000	80,000	15,000	295,000
	Total				1,815,000

23. Other properties in which the parish has a leasehold interest are: (Property located at 9 Gambia Place):

		Building	Contents	Totals
Rented as Rectory		450,000	0	450,000
	Total			450,000

Summary of consolidated receipts and payments

24. A summary of the financial position over the last five years are set out below:

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
RECEIPTS					
Total all centres, plus Parish Council where applicable					
Offertories and Donations	83,718	122,986	113,072	116,415	134,991
Missions	3,849	2,471	0	7,902	0
Interest, rents, etc	375	335	889	624	1,530
Grants (including source)	N/A	N/A	14,000	45,000	40,000
Other sources	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTAL RECEIPTS	87,567	125,792	127,961	121,590	135,431
Cash Assets/ Uncommitted Reserves (excluding Ministerial Expense A/c)	26,596	30,473	37,906	34,941	25,139

⁶ St. Thomas' Rectory Management P/L was incorporated to act as Trustee for this property, with St. Thomas' installed as the sole tenant.

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PAYMENTS					
Total all centres, plus Parish Council where applicable					
Stipends & Allowances	47,956	68,916	81,848	113,038	127,296
Diocesan Cost Recovery	7,856	10,500	13,372	17,245	16,537
Property Costs	4,943	15,069	9,585	22,506	23,951
Missions	3,849	2,471	3,625	2,350	4,878
Repayment of loans	3,000	1,500	3,000	4,500	0
Other (Detail if total exceeds \$5,000)	5,446	12,892	6,874	7,415	16,196
	5,290	7,216	7,975	8,974	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	78,340	11,8564	123,279	17,1527	193,570
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS	9,602	7,228	-4,682	1,813	5,535
LIABILITIES	6,170	7,835	-1,682	4,631	10,166

25. The parish has no outstanding debts.

26. This Bishop of Western Sydney and the Archdeacon strongly support this application.

Recommendation

27. The Western Sydney Regional Council recommends that the provisional parish of Cranebrook be reclassified as a parish with effect from 1 January 2008.

For and on behalf of the Western Sydney Regional Council.

KEN ALLEN
Regional Archdeacon

27 August 2007