

Proposal to change the status of the provisional parish of Newtown with Erskineville

(A report from the South Sydney Regional Council.)

Initiation of proposal

1. A proposal is being made to the Archbishop by the minister and churchwardens of the provisional parish of St Stephen's, Newtown with Holy Trinity, Erskineville under clause 4(1)(b) of the Parishes Ordinance 1979.

Details of meeting

2. A meeting of the South Sydney Regional Council held on 27 June 2007 considered the proposal under clause 5 of the ordinance.

3. The South Sydney Regional Council certifies that all procedural requirements under clauses 4 and 6 of the Parishes Ordinance have been complied with 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

5. Anglican ministry began in Newtown in 1845. The present building was erected in 1874 and the ministry of the parish flourished over the next 100 years. However, for many reasons including significant demographic change, the parish has been in decline for several decades. In 2001, St Stephen's, Newtown lost its status as full parish.

6. By the time the Rev Canon Raymond Heslehurst was appointed rector of St Stephen's and acting curate-in-charge of Erskineville in 1998, the parish was in dire straits. The Regional Council, in an unusual move, but believing in the need to keep St Stephen's going, agreed to support the parish by paying a substantial proportion of the rector's stipend.

7. The Rev Peter Rodgers was appointed as curate-in-charge of Newtown on 5 August 2002 and acting curate-in-charge of Erskineville in 2002.

8. Since that time, under God growth has been taking place and the ministry of the gospel has being re-established within this parish.

9. In early 2007, the provisional parish of St Stephen's, Newtown was amalgamated with Holy Trinity, Erskineville. Since the early 1990s the Erskineville property has been occupied by the church of the

Mar Thomas community in Sydney and their minister has lived in the rectory. Their minister is replaced every three years by appointment from India and each successive minister has, up until early 2006, ministered to the very small band of people at Erskineville. The Mar Thoma congregation is very keen to buy its own property in the western part of Sydney.

10. This amalgamation has provided the parish with another ministry centre and rectory-standard house for future staff. Weekly services for the small Anglo congregation are now conducted on Sunday afternoon at Holy Trinity.

11. Less than five years after Peter Rodgers' appointment, the parish now supports a minister, an office/ hall administrator three days a week, a pastoral assistant one day a week and two student ministers. With the assistance of a regional grant, the parish also employs a children's ministry worker for three days a week. At the end of 2005, the regional grant for the payment of the rector ceased and the parish became self-sufficient.

12. From an average attendance of 40 adults and 10 children in 2002, the parish has grown to the point where there are 150 adults and 25 children present on a Sunday attending either the morning or the evening service. The greatest growth has been seen in the new 7.00 pm service relaunched in 2005 under the name "Church in the Graveyard". Erskineville still continues with an attendance of 10 adults.

13. Nine Bible study groups meet during the week, with a membership of over 80 people. Other parish activities include a youth group and a play group. The parish teaches Scripture in two primary schools, including the supervision of a team of teachers from Moore College.

14. Parish life is marked by a strong interest in social action which is one of the many ways in which appeal is being made to the Newtown community, and the parish is becoming more deeply connected with its community. A partnership has been established with Anglicare that has resulted in a counsellor on site and available to the community one day per week.

15. Improvements to church property and infrastructure include the long-awaited creation of church offices, a kitchen in the church building, restoration of the church gates and roadway, substantial repairs to the stained glass windows and the installation of new sound and media equipment. There is still much work to be done with the aim of bringing the parish properties up to an acceptable standard.

Future plans

16. By 2009, the parish expects to fully fund the children's worker and to employ an assistant minister. Plans are under way to plant a

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new congregation in Erskineville and also to plant a new congregation from the St Stephen's evening service.

17. The population of the provisional parish stands at approximately 16,000 people.

18. In the current year, regular attendance at St Stephen's is 150 adults and 25 children as follows:

9.30 am 70 adults and 25 children
7.00 pm 80 adults and no children

Particulars of Church Property

19. Details of property held by the Anglican Church Property Trust upon trust for the Provisional Parish are as follows:

Newtown:

	Value of Land and Improvements	Condition of Building
Church	\$18,883,500	Reasonable
Hall	\$1,293,000	Reasonable
Rectory	\$1,261,000	Reasonable
Stone Walls	\$147,000	Reasonable
Garage	\$14,000	Reasonable

Erskineville:

	Value of Land and Improvements	Condition of Building
Church	\$2,250,000	Reasonable
Shed	\$1,000	Reasonable
Rectory	\$255,000	Reasonable
Garage	\$9,000	Reasonable

Summary of consolidated receipts and payments

20. A summary of the financial position over the past three years and the budget for 2007 is set out below:

Newtown:

	2004	2005	2006	2007 Budget
Receipts	\$	\$	\$	\$
Offerories	48,631	74,186	110,821	134,000
Donations	11,328	0	1,854	0
Missions	2,648	1,416	12,000	3,000
Special Services	6,464	11,788	0	12,000
Grants	27,304	31,008	26,612	25,000

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Interest	5,523	6,002	0	6,000
Other	7,106	39,244	0	0
Trading Activities excess	45,649	24,763	0	23,664
Total	154,653	188,407	196,047	\$203,664

	2004	2005	2006	2007 Budget
Expenditure	\$	\$	\$	\$
Stipends/Salaries	71,074	56,515	59,131	58,039
Cost recovery	12,712	15,008	16,298	17,000
Resources for Ministry	15,005	38,208	43,561	42,672
Parish Administration	7,309	5,498	11,800	34,372
Property repairs/ maintenance	15,417	21,979	25,271	31,760
Other	392	0	2,466	3,500
Total	121,909	137,208	170,527	187,343

Erskineville:

	2004	2005	2006	2007 Budget
Receipts	\$	\$	\$	\$
Offeratories	7,013	6,468	5,724	6,000
Interest	2,372	4,007	5,660	5,300
GST refunds	2,541	0	0	0
Trading income	8,848	12,990	27,057	35,000
Other	3,295	2,806	2,893	0
Total	24,070	26,271	41,334	46,300

	2004	2005	2006	2007 Budget
Expenditure	\$	\$	\$	\$
Staffing	0	0	6,485	12,000
Cost recovery	757	714	1,136	1,300
Parish donations	200	421	250	400
Administration	244	636	554	600
Property R & M	17,621	15,373	33,798	16,000
Other	88	0	453	0
Parish payment	2,429	3,850	3,830	0
Total	21,339	20,994	46,506	30,300

21. The parish has no outstanding debts.
22. The Bishop of South Sydney and the Archdeacon of South Sydney strongly support this application.

Recommendation

23. The South Sydney Regional Council recommends that the provisional parish of Newtown with Erskineville be reclassified as a parish with effect from 1 January 2008.

For and behalf of the South Sydney Regional Council.

DERYCK HOWELL
Regional Archdeacon

26 July 2007