

South Western Region buildings and property strategy

15/22 Toward the development of a Diocesan Property Strategy

(A report of the Standing Committee.)

Key Points

- By Resolution 15/22, the Synod asked the Standing Committee to prepare a Diocesan-wide, Ministry-led, Buildings and Property Strategy.
- One Regional Ministry-led, Buildings and Property Strategy has been prepared for consideration by Synod before embarking on preparing the remaining four Regional strategies and an over-arching Diocesan-wide strategy. The South Western Region was chosen as the subject of the first draft Regional Strategy, which will be a template for the remaining four Diocesan Regions.
- The Draft South Western Region Buildings and Property Strategy has been prepared for review by, and consultation with, Synod members, in consultation with Rectors and Wardens of the South Western Region and working in close cooperation with the Regional Bishop.
- The Draft Strategy is available at www.sds.asn.au/synod-2023-draft-south-western-region-building-and-property-strategy. Comments on the draft may be made up to 15th November 2023. Comments/submissions will be reviewed, and any necessary amendments made to the Draft Strategy, prior to approval by the Standing Committee.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to report back on progress against Synod resolution 15/22.

Recommendations

2. Synod receive this report.
3. Synod, noting the report 'South Western Region buildings and property strategy' –
 - (a) note that the members of Synod have been invited to provide feedback on the draft South Western Region Buildings and Property Strategy, and that they can send their feedback on the Strategy to the Diocesan Secretary (DiocesanSecretary@sydney.anglican.asn.au) by 15 November 2023,
 - (b) request the Standing Committee to consider approving the South Western Region Buildings and Property Strategy, having taken into account the feedback from Synod members, and
 - (c) request the Standing Committee to prepare the remaining four Regional strategies and an over-arching Diocesan-wide ministry-directed property strategy and report back to the next session of the Synod.

Background

4. By Resolution 15/22, the Synod, among other things, asked the Standing Committee to prepare a diocesan-wide ministry-directed property strategy for the next session of the Synod, taking into account the feedback from Synod members.
5. Standing Committee delegated the coordination of the diocesan-wide ministry-directed property strategy to the Anglican Church Growth Corporation (**ACGC**).
6. Only one response was received to the 2022 Synod discussion paper.

Discussion

7. In Q1 2023, the ACGC Chair and CEO agreed, in consultation with the Archbishop, to focus reporting back to Synod in 2023 on one Regional strategy as a prototype for review by Synod before developing strategies for the remaining four regions. The South Western Region was chosen as the focus for 2023.
8. The Draft South Western Buildings and Property Strategy (**Draft Strategy**) is presented to Synod as draft for comment. It is available on the SDS website at www.sds.asn.au/synod-2023-draft-south-western-region-building-and-property-strategy. Because it is proposed that this be the template for the other four regions, it is appropriate to provide the opportunity for all Synod members to comment.

Development of the Draft Strategy

9. ACGC collaborated with Bishop Peter Lin to firstly release a detailed discussion paper to Rectors and Wardens of all South Western Region parishes. 25 detailed submissions were received from South Western Region parishes (there are 45 active parishes in the South Western Region).
10. The Draft Strategy was prepared using the most up-to-date, post-COVID population data available from PlanningNSW and SGS Economics. The Diocesan Registrar has provided updated attendance statistics for the year prior to COVID-19 and for 2020 and 2021 (both impacted by COVID). The analysis has been from a perspective of objectively optimising the building/property and ministry (staff) resources in the South Western Region for effective ministry and evangelism over the next 30 years.
11. The South Western Region includes the fastest growing greenfields areas, and some of the fastest growing urban infill areas in the Diocese. The key outcomes of the Draft Strategy identify:
 - (a) greenfield and urban infill parishes requiring parish multiplications due to the expected population growth,
 - (b) urban infill areas requiring upgrades to existing infrastructure,
 - (c) potential parish partnerships where current and future parish populations are significantly smaller than the parish population catchment sizes set in the draft strategy, and
 - (d) under-utilised properties that could be re-purposed or redeveloped as part of the Diocesan Urban Renewal Pilot Program (URPP) or sold, with the proceeds going to church upgrades or the parish multiplications required to meet population demand.
12. Of note is –
 - (a) The analysis shows that the region currently has 45 parishes. Based on 30,000 person parish population catchments, in 2026 the Region would need 44 parishes. However, in 2056, this would increase to 64 parishes.
 - (b) However, the above analysis is a starting point that requires greater nuance. When looking at the number of new parishes that need to be created with parish population catchments between 30,000-40,000, the analysis undertaken indicates a need for 18 new parishes (especially in the South Western growth corridor), while there is the opportunity for closer parish partnerships for at least nine parishes.
 - (c) There are also opportunities to reallocate parish boundaries where more recent transport infrastructure has resulted in travel pattern blockages within parishes.
13. The Draft Strategy provides data-driven suggested strategies and actions for consideration and implementation; these are not legislated by ordinance. The actions will be predominantly coordinated through the South Western Region Mission Areas but with ultimate accountability by the Regional Bishop.
14. This approach will invariably result in the need for more nuanced assessments of the recommendations. The Regional Bishop, via the Mission Areas of South Western Region, will be responsible for these assessments which will influence timing and need to implement the recommendations.

Next steps

15. Comments and submissions can be provided to the Diocesan Secretary until 15th November 2023.
16. ACGC will then review the comments and make any necessary amendments to the draft strategy and submit to Standing Committee for final approval. Using the lessons learned, ACGC will then commence preparation of the strategies for the remaining four regions. These will be submitted to Synod progressively as they are completed.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

BRIONY BOUNDS
Diocesan Secretary

14 August 2023