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”

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## God's grace is too lavish!

*Jonah 4*

Jonah the prodigal missionary has finally delivered his message from God to the town of Nineveh.

“In forty days, Nineveh will be destroyed and overturned.” To his surprise the Ninevites heed the message and as a result God does not bring destruction on them. Jonah preaches and sees one of the biggest conversions in history; 120,000 people turn their lives around.

Jonah should have been pleased with this response. But he is not! The biblical record says he becomes displeased and angry. “Is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee. Because I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God who relents from sending calamity.”

Jonah is angry because God is so gracious and so compassionate. Jonah is angry because God changes his mind and doesn't follow through with his judgement. He is too full of grace. He is too full of mercy. In Jonah's mind he should have made these people suffer



From the Bishop  
Robert Bartholomaeus

for their deeds. Whenever someone gives a hint of repentance, God forgives them. Jonah is angry because God is too kind!

“  
*Jonah is angry  
because God  
is too kind!*”

Whenever we are angry, we have lost something. What has Jonah lost? Jonah has lost a world where he can have his enemies judged and condemned. A world where people get what they deserve. He wants a world where his enemies get karma instead of mercy. He doesn't want a world where his enemies get off scot-free.

Jonah's response is certainly very fascinating. God is too compassionate? God is not exacting and judgemental enough? What was Jonah thinking?

Don't be too quick to pronounce judge-

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## LCA NSW and ACT District is *Walking together* IN MISSION by:



- Supporting congregations and ministries in mission and ministry
- Supporting congregations in transition
- Developing and supporting alternative models for ministry
- Planting and renewing congregations
- Developing and supporting networking and connections between congregations and ministries
- Developing and supporting leadership – through the Bishop leading leadership teams

## DISTRICT NEWS

For your prayer  
and care

### Ordination

- Pr David Jarman, chaplain at Albury Aged Care, was ordained as an SMP on 18 December 2022

### Installation

- Pr Darryl Shoemsmith was installed at Henty on 26 February 2023

### Anniversary

- Holy Trinity Finnish congregation in Canberra celebrated their 50th Anniversary on 7-8 January 2023

### Deaths

- Pr Lionel Otto died on 22 December 2022, aged 82. Pr Lionel served Cooma (1969-1973) and as NSW District President (1990-2005)
- Pr Robert Fechner died on 14 January 2023. Pr Rob served at Epping (1973), Canberra (1973), and Walla Walla (1973-1980).
- Alice Hofman, wife of Pr Marinus Hoffmann, died on 22 January
- Pr Gordon Gerhardy died on 25 January. Pr Gordon served at Wagga Wagga (1989-1998).
- Pr Michael Hassold, former principal of ALC, died on 28 January.

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ment now on Jonah. Because God's Word always acts like a mirror. Jonah is actually a reflection of what we usually think and do.

Yes, we want God to be compassionate. Well, at least towards me (and my clan). But we don't really want God to be kind and merciful to others who we detest, namely our enemies. For them we want judgement. We want them to get what they deserve. (This is why we find it so hard to forgive someone who has deeply hurt us.)

We look at the evening news - or our news feed - and think, what did those people do to deserve that. Were they speeding? Were they mixing in the wrong crowds? Have they neglected God and his ways?

We are living through a very interesting time in our society. We can see how society is disintegrating as people forsake God and no longer believe in him. Anxiety levels have never been higher. The number of people who are lonely is sky rocketing. We conclude to ourselves, "No wonder society is suffering, they have forsaken God. They deserve what is coming upon them."

When we think like that, we are no different than Jonah. God wants us to see people the way he sees them. Not deserving judgement but being open to repentance and forgiveness.

The Ninevites were a people about

“ Look around  
at our non-believing  
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compassion. ”

as sick as you can get. Murderers and abusers and torturers. They deserved the hand of wrath if ever a people did. But God had mercy on them when they repented. It really goes against our human ways.

Its understanding this overflowing mercy of God – this grace which is too lavish - which makes us look around at our non-believing neighbours the way God sees them, with compassion. Without his grace in our hearts, our mission endeavours will be self-seeking at best.

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My prayer for our district is this: That God will grow in each of us the knowledge and experience of God's abundant grace, so much so that we will no longer be prodigal missionaries with our limited love and limited grace, but missionaries with the full heart of God. Overflowing with grace and mercy for all people, even those who deserve it the least.

Pastor Robert Bartholomaeus

## Pr Francis Leung Ordained at LifeWay

Pastor Francis Leung was ordained as an SMP on 27 November 2022 at LifeWay Epping. After a successful career in radiography in numerous hospitals from Hong Kong to Sydney and the Central Coast, Francis completed a Theology Diploma in 2019, and has served in teaching and church leadership for many years.

Pastor Francis introduces himself:

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said: "Here am I. Send me!"* Isaiah 6:8

He Ne Ni, here I am. This verse impacted me early on when I became a Christian. My Lord found me when I was a sinner, and called me when I did not know Him.

My response to His calling was 'Here I am, please save me.' Then when He called me again to serve Him, my response was the same. Here I am, please use me.

I have been serving Him in various capacities and places, from Hong Kong to Australia. I have discovered that the more you serve Jesus, the more you get to know Him. And the more you know Jesus, the more you want to serve Him. I am supported by my wife, Peggy, and my daughter, Grace.



**Pr Francis and Peggy  
Leung**

Pr Francis Leung

## Installation of Pr Darryl Shoemsmith at Henty

Pastor Darryl Shoemsmith was installed as pastor of the Henty Parish on Sunday 26 February.

Pastor Darryl introduces himself:

I am a late-comer to Lutheran ministry. I was educated at Concordia College Toowoomba, studied agriculture at Gatton, and then worked in the firearms industry. I became a gunsmith in the U.S. and owned a gunshop in Toowoomba for many years, as well as operating a rural cattle property west of Toowoomba. I still enjoy hunting, fishing, cooking and making things - mainly from wood and leather.

I enjoy history and historical things. I am one of those few Lutheran pastors who play the bagpipes. Becoming a minister of religion was as much a surprise to me as it was to my family, but God had his plans and sometimes they are totally unexpected by his people. That meant five years at Australian Lutheran College in Adelaide, which began in 2013. To date it has been

a wonderful journey, with our first parish being Christchurch NZ. We thoroughly enjoyed our time there and will treasure those memories.

I have been married to Shirley for 45 years, and we have three children and seven grandchildren

- soon to be eight. Our youngest son Ed was recently ordained as a minister of the Lutheran Church, serving in Hervey Bay. Shirley is an avid sewer, enjoys quilting and accompanying me on our visits. We also share an interest in food gardening. We are looking forward to our new journey with the Henty parish and community.



**Pr Darryl and Shirley Shoemsmith**

Pr Darryl Shoemsmith

## Farewell to former District President, Pastor Lionel Otto



**Pr Lionel Otto**  
22/12/1940 -  
22/12/2022

Born in Toowoomba Qld, Pastor Lionel Otto was ordained in 1964, having married Jan just a few weeks before. Lionel served congregations in Biloela Qld, Cooma NSW, and Mannum then Glenelg SA. In 1984 he became the Mission Director in SA, then District President of NSW in 1990 until his retirement in 2005. Lionel and Jan retired in Adelaide, enjoying living nearer to their children and six grandchildren.

Lionel will be remembered for his contribution to many ministries, his support of youth ministry, home missions, and congregational life and growth.

For over a decade Gaidis Zids worked as District Administrator alongside Lionel, when he was District President of NSW (the role we now call Bishop). Gaidis has fond memories of a calm, wise, faithful pastor and friend.

*Gaidis: We first met Lionel in 1970 when he moved to Cooma and was soon appointed the youth pastor for the NSW District. At the time I was president of LYNSW and Marja was secretary so we often went to Cooma for LYNSW exec meetings. This was the beginning of a life long friendship with Lionel and his family. We kept in touch over the years and eventually he returned to NSW in 1990 as the President of the District. In 1993 I was retrenched from my job. When I returned home to tell Marja the news she had a strong feeling that I should call Lionel. When I did this a few days later and told him my sad news his answer was 'that's great - we are looking for a District administrator and I was thinking of you but didn't know how I could get you out of your current job!'*

*Lionel was the one who, together with the manager of Open Book, found the site for the District office at Rhodes. Working in the District office with Lionel and Jan was great. I don't recall Lionel ever losing his temper and it was a pleasure to work with him. He was always calm and seemed to always know the right way to handle issues that arose. His faith never wavered and this was evident to all who knew him. He always expected the best outcomes and looked for the best in people and situations.*

*When he retired we still kept in touch and on occasions would visit him in Adelaide. He was always a great host and we had many good times together. Even when he was very ill in his last days he would still call to say hello, especially on birthdays. He was a great friend and mentor and he will certainly be missed.*

Pastor Fred Veerhuis recalls a defining moment in his own pastoral journey, an early encounter with Lionel:

In the mid 1980's when I was the Pastor at Woden, we were looking to be involved in mission in our local community. We heard that 'The Director of Evangelism and Church Development' from South Australia - Pastor Lionel Otto - was going to be running a seminar in Sydney, so we asked him if he could come and share his wisdom with us on his way home. He was happy to share.

On the night he was with us, he began by asking someone to read a passage from the Gospel of Mark:

*'Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup>He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup>and to have authority to drive out demons. <sup>16</sup>These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), <sup>17</sup>James*

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son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”, <sup>18</sup> Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.’ (Mark 3:13-19)

Lionel then asked us a question. ‘Why did Jesus want apostles?’ We put forward our answers. They would be witnesses for him. They would carry on his mission. They would be the foundation of the church after he ascended to heaven. He said, ‘Yes, but what does Mark say in verse 14?’ We all had a quick look back at verse 14 and then began to call out, ‘To preach and have authority over demons.’ He said, ‘Yes, you are right, but there is still one thing, more important than everything else, which you have missed.’

**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Cor 4:17-18**

I have never forgotten that moment when he challenged us to look again. It has stayed with me for almost 40 years and has never stopped impacting all my preaching and teaching and pastoral care. What was this ‘one thing?’ I looked back again at verse 14. ‘He appointed the twelve... **that they might be with him...**’ Our future ‘Bishop’ went on to say that most Christians really want to do things for Jesus, but the crucial thing, first of all, and above all, was to learn how to **be with** Jesus and sit at his feet.

For me personally, Lionel was an encourager. He told me off if he needed to, and he always had my back. Always. He was a ‘safe space’.

*With thanks to Gaidis Zids and Pr Fred Veerhuis*

## Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy at Albury Aged Care

“I appreciate this more than you probably realise.”

These were the words that a resident spoke to me, as I sat and listened to them emotionally, mentally, and spiritually process a suspected diagnosis of lung cancer.

In the grand scheme of things, my part in God’s ministry to this resident is relatively little. I listened. I prayed with them. We will continue to have similar conversations. This seems not much at all, by worldly standards. Many might question the point of pastoral care – *what exactly is it that that you do here, anyway?* – in the midst of the noisy, relentless hubbub of medical care that a resident receives.

Chaplaincy and pastoral care in a medical/aged care setting is a mysterious beast, often discussed as being a vital ministry to those going through a difficult phase of their lives. Yet its attributes are often vague and hard to nail down. Different people have different ideas about what constitutes effective spiritual care, and even governments and health services are now weighing in, trying to find a secular way of articulating the care of souls (results are, as one might imagine, mixed).

Yet God in His mercy and grace uses simple moments

to give healing and reassurance. He uses our time spent – often just listening to someone pour out their inner turmoil, their guilt, their fears and anxieties – and His Holy Spirit works in the silent pauses in such conversations.

Ultimately, the greatest dimension of pastoral care, I have learned – is simply giving someone your time. Nothing in God’s economy is wasted. In the same way that Christ sat down with tax-collectors and sinners, we too, regardless of our role or place in God’s kingdom, are called to give our time, our care and concern to others – reaching them wherever they are at, regardless of whether they darken the doors of our churches or not.

We can come up with clever slogans, targeted marketing, or powerful theological arguments. But in the end, when we minister to a fallen world drowning in a sea of hopelessness and strife, we must actually care and demonstrate that love to others.

*“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal,”* as St. Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthian church.

Food for thought, perhaps. We may find that our society appreciates that more than we realise.

In the past year of aged care chaplaincy at Lutheran Aged Care, in Albury, I have been trying to set aside preconceptions, and listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as novice pastor in this very specialist field. In many ways, chaplaincy is nothing like ministry in a parish setting – although I am grateful to the congregation of St. Paul’s Tamworth for helping to shape me in ministry with them, through the pandemic.

I am also incredibly grateful that I am not alone in this ministry. I have a wonderful, hard working team of pastoral care workers – all of whom I believe God has placed to use their unique talents, skills, and abilities to reach all



**Pastor David Jarman was ordained as an SMP on 18 December 2022. Pr David (third from left) with his wife Nicole, and (l-r) Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus, Pastors Christian Fandrich, Gary Kenney, Will Frost, Ernie Kiss, David Cherry, and John Borchert.**

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# 50th Anniversary of Canberra Finnish Church

Now that the COVID 19 restrictions have at last eased, the Canberra Finnish Church had our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on 7-8 January.

Around 70-80 people gathered for the two days of celebrations. This emigrant congregation had its founding council meeting on 7 March 1971. More than fifty years is a long time in the life of human being, as Pauli and Seija Piironen know very well. They have been with the Canberra Finnish church throughout its entire existence, with Seija being a council member until last year. At the celebration event they told us lots of memories from the decades, as did many others of our honoured guests.

Saturday was a fun, relaxed day; we heard lots of good stories and looked through photos from years past. In his sermon on Sunday, Bishop Robert Bartholomeus said that while sometimes we can't see what God is doing in our local congregations, we can be

certain that He is doing something new in another place. So don't be concerned – everything is in his good and merciful hands.

We all enjoyed good food, good company and listening to the valuable message.

Pr Janne Pekkarinen



*(l-r) Finnish Pastors Ian Vainikka, Tommi Vuorinen, Bishop Robert Bartholomeus, Janne Pekkarinen, Lassi Pappinen and Heikki Hurskainen.*

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our residents – not just those who choose to come to our regular worship services or seek us out for spiritual support.

Ministry in our context comprises two areas – one of traditional Christian ministry, administering Word and Sacrament, prayers, rites for the dying, and conducting funerals – while also being a part of a wider professional organisation that seeks to provide the best care possible for the 180-odd residents in our charge.

In much the same way that missionaries must learn a local language and culture, so too do we have to ingratiate ourselves among the medical culture of aged care. There are unique ebbs-and-flows of activities and care requirements. Everything is (at least on paper) regimented and orderly, kept to strict time requirements, yet also flexible and subject to change daily as resident needs change, or as outside factors (such as a COVID outbreak) set things upside-down.

If a pastor is the nominal 'spiritual leader' of a congregation, then a chaplain, and by extension the wider pastoral care team, are more 'spiritual advisors,' fellow travellers, coming alongside residents and staff as they deal with the everyday battles of living and working in aged care. Pastoral Care is subject to the same stringent requirements of every other member of the care staff. We must document our work and interact professionally with everyone we meet. There are standards of care we are expected to provide, and those standards are increasing in scope, in the wake of the Royal Commission in Aged Care back in 2016.

Then, of course, there is the elephant in the room – the spectre of COVID that continues to haunt us. We are grateful that the world can hopefully move on from the dark days of the acute stage of the pandemic, but for us,

the fight continues to keep our residents safe. Daily rapid antigen tests are still the norm. Masks are still mandatory, and continued vigilance is necessary for the foreseeable future.

All of this takes its toll. Staff are tired. Residents are weary, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Much of our work at the present moment is helping to rebuild hope and recover after the enormous stresses of the COVID era. In many ways, we act as intercessors and advocates – praying for those who may struggle to pray for themselves, looking out for those who may be so focussed on caring for others that they break down themselves. Grief and vicarious trauma are ever-present realities and we in pastoral care are not immune from them ourselves.

As our society ages, all of this is a growing mission field – and one hopes that the church will be able to find its voice to better speak God's promises of hope and salvation, grace and peace to the aged. We Lutherans have our sense of vocation – of calling and career, of marriage and family – but what do we have to say to those who have finished their careers, who may have lost their spouse, whose family may have moved far away and/or abandoned them? What is our vocation in our twilight years?

This comes to the fore as we process the looming implications of Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) legislation, coming into force this November in NSW and casting a shadow across aged care – not only in our state, but across the country.

Please pray for us. We appreciate it more than you may realise.

God bless, David Jarman  
Chaplain, Lutheran Aged Care Albury

## Frontier units underway

Frontier School of Mission recently held its first intensive at Port Macquarie from 20-24 February with nine students who came together to study 'Foundational Christian Beliefs'.

The textbook was Mark Worthing's *This is Most Certainly True. Learning Jesus Christ through Luther's Small Catechism*, which was published just weeks earlier by Australian Christian Resources.

We were pleased not only to have students doing the unit as a part of either a Certificate or Diploma through Melbourne School of Theology, but were also excited to have three Warrambui interns from PNG take the unit as well as three audit students. Members of St Peters, Port Macquarie provided billeting and meals and enjoyed the chance to get to know these students better.

The next FSM intensive, 'Missional Discipleship', will be held at Port Macquarie from 20-24 March and taught by Dr Tania Nelson (LCANZ Department of



Pr Mark Worthing and Frontier School of Mission's first students

Local Mission) and Pastor Nathan Hedt (LCANZ pastor for new and renewing churches). It is not too late to sign up for this unit!

In second semester FSM will hold three one-week intensives from August to early October. These will be: 'Preaching', 'The Theology Mission', and 'Jesus and the Gospels'.

For details on any of these intensives please contact the District Office, email [frontier@lca.org.au](mailto:frontier@lca.org.au) or contact the Frontier School of Mission dean, Dr Mark Worthing, at [mworthing@mst.edu.au](mailto:mworthing@mst.edu.au)



## Multicultural Service of Thanksgiving, St Paul's Sydney

On the afternoon of 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 St Paul's Sydney congregation was delighted to host a Multicultural Service of Thanksgiving, involving members of Lutheran churches of different cultural backgrounds from the Sydney region. We were blessed to be joined by members of the Finnish, Norwegian, Indonesian, Chinese and German Lutheran Churches - all of whom took part in the worship service itself as well as contributing dishes to a shared dinner afterwards.

There was a feeling of great joy present as many people gathered for worship. Attendees were welcomed at the door by a vibrant message in chalk on the footpath, international flags hung over the pathway and a greeter dressed in Dutch national costume. Conversation flowed as people of many backgrounds assembled to praise God together, faithfully joined in the Holy Spirit. This gathering was blessed by singing from a Chinese group, a choral item from the Indonesian church and Bible/prayer readings in several languages including Cantonese (Chinese), Norwegian and German. The communion accompaniment was sung in Finnish by Pr. Lassi Pappinen. The final blessing was given in Lithuanian by St Paul's own Virginia Millar, wearing Lithuanian national dress. St Paul's was full to overflowing with an attendance of 88 people plus many more online worshippers, and the atmosphere of love and sharing palpable. An offering of \$622 was received for ALWS.



Following worship, the shared dinner created new ways for the Body of Christ to meet and get to know one another. St Paul's members also contributed to this meal- adding food items from Tanzania, China and Egypt. The dinner hall was decorated with international flags, textiles from Africa and a wall hanging from

Rajasthan, further reflecting God's blessings of creativity and colour. One tremendous blessing was the meeting of the Indonesian and Chinese singing groups. Previously unknown to one another, the two groups discovered a common song between them, and the dinner hall soon echoed to the sounds of these groups singing together with huge smiles on their faces! God has truly blessed the Sydney region with a range of expressions of His goodness and creativity, and it was a joy to bring them together. This service also attracted visitors from as far afield as the Central Coast and approximately 100 worshippers online.

The generous support of the LLL is acknowledged in helping this event to occur. Even before the worship service itself, attendees expressed the wish that events like this occur again - perhaps even twice a year. Following this event, St Paul's congregation are actively working towards planning further gatherings of these diverse groups to promote conversation, love and fellowship between all of God's people here in Sydney and beyond. We thank God for the blessings He provides in His full creativity and abundance.



Pr Richard Schwedes and Bridgitte Willshire

# District Church Council News

## Supporting Congregations and Ministries in Mission and ministry: Tuggeranong Lutheran Church

The DCC was blessed to be able to hear from the Tuggeranong community Development Coordinator Cheryl Turek on all the wonderful work she has been part of facilitating within the Tuggeranong community. Ministries include weekly services to a local aged care facility, Cuppa and craft mornings, a community Garden, bread distribution ministry. All of these ministries draw the community into the local Church and how each of these are fresh expressions of church. Cheryl is currently being mentored by Pastor Nathan Hedt from the LCA New and Renewing Churches department.

## Lavington Lutheran Church

Bishop Robert has been meeting with the Albury and Lavington leadership teams, and looking at ways that they might be able to work together more, potentially working together administratively while remaining two congregations with one pastor. This will enable the sharing of resources and efficiencies as they work together in the Albury and Lavington communities.

## Planting and Renewing Congregations: Jindera Chapel report

Albury Lutheran Church has been partnering with St Johns Lutheran School Jindera to facilitate a new church plant and community based in the Jindera school. Already several events have been held, with over 100 participants attending the first. An MOU has been signed between Albury and St Johns school Jindera, and Peter Reed who was formally the worship music leader and technical assistant at St Luke's. Peter who has had previous experience in church planting has been employed as the leader of the church plant for this new venture.

## District Leadership through the Bishop leading leadership teams: Strategic Directions Facilitator

Pastor Ian Rentsch as the part-time strategic Directions Facilitator shared with the DCC particularly of his work with some of the Western NSW congregations. Many congregations are wrestling with the challenges of diminishing numbers particularly with many young people moving to the bigger cities for work and Uni. This then opens the challenge and opportunity of what fresh expressions of church might look like in their community and what ministries is God calling them into in these changing times. This also opens the door for training and mentoring of leaders, particularly recognizing that training country people means they stay in country communities. Frontier School of Mission is looking at how to do such training.

## NSW and ACT District Convention of Synod

The NSW and ACT District have received much commendation from leaders in the Church and particularly the LCA for our District Synod. The regular comment has been on how much the District Synod was focused

on Mission and Ministry and that this was all undertaken in such a spirit of teamwork even when there was opposing views. The DCC have been keen to keep mission and ministry as the focus of what we do, and so this outcome was pleasing to hear. The DCC at their meeting were able to recommend the Synod minutes be approved for distribution and very much thank all the minute takers and verifiers for all their work in getting this done promptly. The synod minutes are available for download on the District website. The DCC have started looking at possible locations for the 2024 District Convention of Synod and we hope to let you know as soon as they are locked in.



## Frontier School of Mission

The DCC heard updates from Mark Worthing and Frontier School of Mission on the preparation for the start of the academic year in 2023. Frontier School of Mission has an advisory Board in place consisting of Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus, Mark Worthing, Richard Schwedes, Wendy Mayer, Alison Short, Sue Smith and Russell Veerhuis. This Board will provide support to Mark Worthing as well as support the facilitation of the various academic teaching and learning programs. FSM have announced that their first two intensives for semester 1 will be run in February and March this year, and already a good turnout of students are enrolled.

## Forbes Floods – disaster and welfare

Bishop Robert in his report noted the flooding in Western areas of NSW and the work being done by the Central West Parish in Forbes and Parkes particularly. The DCC was able to approve and submit an application to the LCA Disaster and Welfare fund to be able to provide funding support into the work going on in these communities. Pastor James Leach together with other Central West members have acquired a couple of coffee urns and were walking around in Forbes meeting and caring for locals, providing a warm drink but more importantly an opportunity to talk and debrief.

## Bass Hill Manse purchase

The District church Council as requested by the Bass Hill congregation purchased a further 2% share of the Bass Hill Manse. This purchase releases funds for the Bass Hill Finnish Congregation to be able to use to further support their ministry amongst the Finnish People in Sydney for the years to come.

## Governance of Specific Ministries: Lutheran School Wagga Wagga

The DCC had the pleasure of endorsing a \$400,000 loan application to the LLL from the Lutheran School Wagga for their Junior playground redevelopment. This opportunity will allow the Lutheran School to transform an unused hillside into an educational and learning resource for the Junior School.

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## Lutheran Aged Care Albury development loan approval

The Lutheran Aged Care in Albury has been working on a \$25M redevelopment for the past couple of years. The DCC heard that they are now down to the last couple of stages, and as such the District was able to endorse a loan application to the LLL by Lutheran Aged Care Albury for the final \$8.5M of the development. It is noted that Albury Aged care were able to fund the first \$16.5M of the development from their own reserves. The DCC acknowledges that Tim McInnes (Chair of the Board) and Wendy Rocks (the CEO) manage a vary good operation on behalf of the Lutheran Church in NSW and the ACT, and this has all been done in what has been challenging times for aged care with increased regulation and Covid.

## Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre

Warrambui Board reported how Warrambui is now starting to gear back up to regular business after Covid. They have been working through staffing with additional support provided to improve this process, as well as adding new members to the Warrambui Board. Warrambui have a new intern program starting in 2023 with a group of 3 interns and a mission facilitator coming from Papua New Guinea to serve and support the mission at Warrambui. Warrambui has also been successful

in recruiting several chefs from Sri Lanka to support the ministry in the coming years. Warrambui note that the new staffing and increased booking into 2023 will provide their own challenges as they work to have the right balance to support all involved. Ian Marks (retired school principal) has been working with the leadership team to help get this balance right.

## Turning Point Ministries

Under the guidance of the DCC, the District and Turning Point Ministries have formalized their relationship in an MOU, this MOU articulates the roles and expectations of all involved in supporting this ministry in the District.

## Lutheran Education in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania LEVNT

Julian Denholm the Executive Director of LEVNT and Shane Patterson the Director of Leadership and School improvement at LEVNT shared an update on how the NSW Schools are travelling. They have been working with the St Mary's Kindergarten in recent months to look how they can support them into the future given the rigorous climate of compliance we now face. The four Riverina Schools all report travelling well as they move into 2023 with student numbers on the rise or at capacity.

Russell Veerhuis, for District Church Council

# Professional Standards

I want to acknowledge the congregations/parishes that have submitted their LCA Child Safety Standards Plans for their congregations/parishes... there are 11 of you 😊

SO, is your congregation/parish among the ones that have not yet completed either the Self-Assessment or submitted a Safety Plan? The LCANZ General Church Board (GCB) endorsed an extension of time that plans are to be submitted by, from end of October 2022 to 31st March 2023.

My calendar tells me that time is zooming up fast.

It is important to note that this work is the responsibility of the church council/governance board and not the task of the Pastor.

There are provisions for some congregations without children in regular attendance to submit a Safety Assurance, HOWEVER, if you believe that your congregation fits this profile, you will need to speak with me about this very soon.

I also refer you back to my message in the December issue of Contact, page 14.

There will be some 'child friendly' resources that will be available for your congregations to display. These are currently in the process of development through the LCANZ Churchwide office, and I will advise when they are available for you.

They are designed for use across all Districts of the LCA. This will eliminate the need for congregations/parishes to produce information/posters locally.

If your congregation has not already accessed other



**REMEMBER!**  
**YOUR CHILD SAFETY PLAN IS DUE 31 MARCH 2023**

Under LCA policy, all congregations are required to submit a Child Safety Plan to ensure they are meeting their legal, ethical and synodical obligations to be a child safe congregation.

**THANK YOU** to all those congregations who have already submitted their plan.

Contact your District PSO if you need help preparing your plan, or contact Mary-Ann or Nicole at the Churchwide Office: [css@lca.org.au](mailto:css@lca.org.au) 08 8267 7300.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA  
CHILD SAFETY

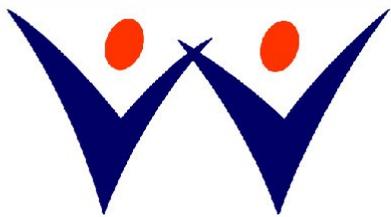
posters related to either Child Safety Standards or other Professional Standards posters, you can either access them directly from the LCANZ website or email me and I can send them to you.

While there is a current emphasis on Child Safety Standards, we must not forget about our responsibilities to plan well for ALL ministry activities. Church council leadership have responsibility for ensuring that all people in leadership roles/elders/pastoral care and those engaging with children/young people have completed their SafeChurch training and hold a current Working with Children Check or Working with Vulnerable People Check. If you require clarification about training, please contact me.

As always, THANK YOU to those of you who have engaged with online training.

May God bless your congregational ministry activities throughout this year.

Carolyn Kiss, LCA Professional Standards Officer  
NSW and ACT District  
[carolyn.kiss@lca.org.au](mailto:carolyn.kiss@lca.org.au) Ph: 0457 770 100



# WARRAMBUI NEWS

March 2023

## Prayer Points

- For our 2023 Interns from PNG (Grace, Moreenicka & Rose)
- For our new staff members (Florence and Wishwa)
- That we will all grow together as a Team
- For recruitment of the remaining staff to return us to our full complement
- For continued growth in capacity and bookings

## Praise Points

- For the successful visa application processes for our new Interns and staff
- For safe arrival of the new Interns and staff, and for the blessing they are to our community
- For the groups returning after a long absence in early 2023

## Centre Director's Update

### 2023 Begins

The new year arrived with a flurry of activity at Warrambui as we welcomed guests, new staff and new interns in the opening weeks.

It was an early start to serving guests this year with our first group, a weeklong camp for recipients of the Rotary Youth Awards, beginning on 7 January. It was also our pleasure to host a number of other events in January including Turning Point Ministry's (TPM's) History Makers and JYC Camps, and a staff development day for 185 teachers and support staff, all from the local Amaroo school.

### Our PNG Interns Have Arrived!

In late January, we were very excited to welcome our first interns from Papua New Guinea under the Arise Volunteer Internship Program - Grace, Moreenicka and Rose. They arrived accompanied by Florence Siba, who has joined our

team as PNG Internship Development Officer.

Having the Interns and Florence join us from PNG is such a blessing, and our community is benefiting immensely from their faith and the joy they bring every day. They are settling in well, despite various periods of unseasonal cold weather, and we are greatly enjoying getting to know them and learning more about each other's cultures.

At the time of writing the Interns are in Port Macquarie visiting St Peter's Lutheran Church and preparing to undertake their first course through the Frontier School of Mission.

You can find out a bit more about our three interns on the following page. If you would like more information on the Arise Volunteer Internship Program, or if you would like to join the support network we are putting together for our PNG Interns, please contact us.



2023 Interns Grace, Rose & Moreenicka, & PNG Internship Development Officer Florence

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 5:1-5

## New Chef & Ongoing Recruitment

In early February, we were pleased to welcome our new Chef, Wishwa Lokusuriya, who arrived from Sri Lanka. Wishwa has a wife and two young daughters who will be joining him in late March. Wishwa's arrival achieves our goal of overcoming industry-wide staff shortages and filling the vacancies in our catering team through immigration and visa sponsorship – a process which began in May of last year.

Please continue to pray for guidance as we try to recruit to three key, fulltime positions to return to our full complement of staff and relieve the pressure on our current staff.

## More Returning Groups

In February and March, we are hosting several long-term clients who we have not been able to serve for

three years due to COVID restrictions and/or reduced operational capacity. These large, high school groups include a number of year 11 or 12 retreats, a school orchestra who has been coming to us for over 25 years, and school who stays with us to prepare for their school musical, conducting acting rehearsals, musician rehearsals, technical preparations and set building.

As we continue to welcome new and returning guests and continue to grow our team back to full capacity, we greatly appreciate the prayer and support of the members of NSW & ACT District.

As we continue in our mission, to serve people by living Jesus, we look forward to serving many of you during 2023.

Yours in Christ,

Dean Salzke - Centre Director



Our new Chefs Wishwa & Udara, & Catering Services Manager Hash

## 2023 Warrambui Interns

### MOREENICKA

Hi, I'm Moreenicka Kei,

I am studying Journalism and Public Relations at the University of Papua New Guinea. I just completed year one. After this internship program, I will return and complete my studies.

I choose to come and serve as an intern because I wanted to grow more in my faith outside of my comfort zone. Also, it is my passion to serve others and show God's love.

I believe that it was God's will for me to be an intern this year. He made everything possible for me to get here. He used those wonderful people in Warrambui and the sponsors of Warrambui to make everything work. Nothing is impossible for God and he is truly just a whisper of Prayer away.

God has taught me many new things here. He works in ways that no human words or vocabulary can explain. God has called me to be here and I'm grateful to him. I just began my internship program and it is week three now, but within these three weeks through the Warrambui team, God has taught me to balance my life spiritually, mentally and physically.

Australia is very different from Papua New Guinea but the most beautiful thing about it is having to participate in a beautiful community like Warrambui which, to be honest, feels like home to me. The weather pattern is very different from PNG but I'm adjusting to it and so far I'm settled in and I'm ready for the year.

I like how everyone here in Warrambui works as a team and it feels like they are my family already. Also the Lutheran churches that I have attended so far, which has been Holy Cross Belconnen and Immanuel Woden, are such welcoming and kind hearted congregations.

Overall I thank God for this wonderful internship program and I am looking forward to ending this year on a high note with God's Grace, Love and Peace.





## GRACE

Hi, my name is Grace Kei,

Before joining Warrambui, I attended Martin Luther Seminary in PNG and finished my first year. I will continue my diploma after this internship program.

I chose to come and be part of this program because the internship is practical and will help me to understand my study more. I will learn about living as a Christian in a different place from PNG and also learn basic service work. This is exciting as it gives me the opportunity to see Australia and experience a new environment.

I became a Lutheran from the influence of my parents and never looked back as it became natural to me as I grew up to know God through them. I believe that this call to Warrambui is in God's plan.

God is teaching me to put his word first so I can learn to do what is pleasing to Him and is right in the sight of people so they can continue to walk in ways that are right.

I find Australia to be different in some ways especially the feel of the place, the weather and the people. All of which I think I am adapting to. This is the second place I've been apart from PNG and it is a great experience.

What I like so far is the feeling of traveling out of PNG and being welcomed into Australia through this internship program and getting to see some parts of Australia.

## ROSE

My name is Rose Cajetan,

I've completed two years at Pacific Adventist University in PNG studying Biology & Chemistry Sciences before I came.

Leaving my comfort zone and moving to Warrambui takes courage, but it is exciting.

My choice to be an intern is to learn more of faith and hospitality and build my relationship with Jesus in a different environment.

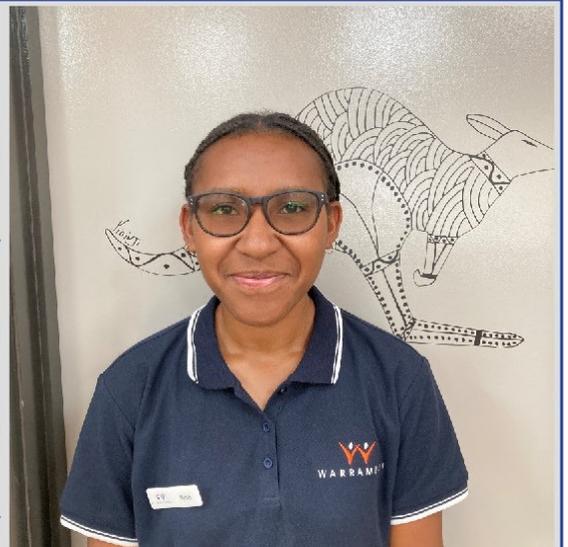
I know my time here will be helpful in getting me to practice applying the word of God while living and serving in a Lutheran community.

God is teaching me by being an intern and working in different areas with love, care and a willing heart. Shining the light of Jesus' love to others by being of service to them.

I've learnt that Australians are helpful, time conscious and are respectful of privacy. A safe environment for girls to live in.

I like the calm Christian environment with caring staff and volunteers who are supportive to us and of good service to Warrambui visitors.

Thank you



May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6





## JUNIOR YOUTH CAMP: GOD'S PROMISES

JYC 2023 was a blast! Our theme for camp was God's Promises. The promises we looked at over the weekend were:

- 1. God is always with us
- 2. God will protect us
- 3. God listens to our Prayers
- 4. God will give us strength
- 5. God forgives our sins
- 6. God will always love us

Camp was rainbow themed and in the first study we looked at the promise God made to Noah through a rainbow. We made tie dye t-shirts on Friday night, and everyone got to wear them on the last day of camp! Other fun activities throughout the weekend included a water game, rainbow craft activities, mega snakes and ladders, a scavenger hunt, and our camp classic hungry hippos. Worship was also a big part of camp and some of the songs we sang were **Promises** by I Am They, **My Lighthouse** and **Jesus Strong and Kind**.

We were so proud of all our campers for getting involved in everything and building their confidence throughout the weekend. It is a huge blessing to see these kids so passionate about Jesus and willing to learn more, whilst having fun! A huge thankyou to our leaders and helpers who really stepped up and served over the weekend. And finally, we give all the praise to Jesus. It is only through him that we have had another great camp.

Eva Reichstein and Hillary Thompson - JYC 2023 Directors

## Camp Calendar

**Better Blokes**  
9-12 June

**Junior Youth Camp**  
14-16 July, Grades 3 to 6

**Leadership Camp**  
24-26 November. Ages 16+

**Back2Base**  
10-14 July, Grades 7 to 12

**Sisterhood**  
August, dates TBC

Keep an eye out for information on our **Young Adults Retreats** as we finalise locations and dates! Ages 16+



0435 314 384

tpm.org.au  
event.bookings@tpm.org.au

facebook.com/tpmcamping  
@turningpointministries\_nsw



# Graduating Class of 2022



**ST PAUL'S  
COLLEGE**  
CELEBRATING  
**75** Years  
1948-2023

## LEADERSHIP

Our College Captains, **Isabell McRae** from Pleasant Hills and **Tilly Phegan** from Walla Walla, presented at the 2023 Australia Day Ceremony at Brocklesby this year.

Congratulations to the following students in Year 7, who received School Citizenship Awards from their former primary schools: **Evie Bahr, Thierry Mahon, Georgia Thomson** and **Aaron Lieschke**. Congratulations also to **Lochlan O'Brien** from Year 12 last year for his Sports Volunteer of the Year Award.

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

St Paul's celebrated our students achievements with family and friends for 2022 at the Albury Performing Arts Centre in December.

Congratulations to all Award winners and students who attended, enjoying a supper afterwards in QE2 Square under a perfect summer night sky. Special mention to our Year level DUX Award winners: -

- DUX Year 7 - **Zoe Wilson**
- DUX Year 8 - **Ella Donoghue & Thomas Sinca**
- DUX Year 9 - **Zac Klemke**
- DUX Year 10 - **Audrey Lieschke**
- DUX Year 11 - **Emma Biar**
- DUX Year 12 - **Makayla Quinn**

## ST PAUL'S CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

We have a wonderful afternoon and evening planned for all past and current families - welcoming everyone to attend. If you are, or know of an Old Collegian of St Paul's, please pass on the details for the 17th March, and ask them to make contact with College to register their current contact details.





CELEBRATING

# 75

Years

1948-2023

**Friday, 17th March 2023**  
**4:30pm - 8pm**

St. Paul's College Grounds, 3 Klemke Ave, Walla Walla NSW

We invite you to share in celebrating **75 years** as we honour the past & look forward to the future

- Live Music
- Food & Drinks
- Games & lots more fun for all ages!

Scan the QR code to keep up to date

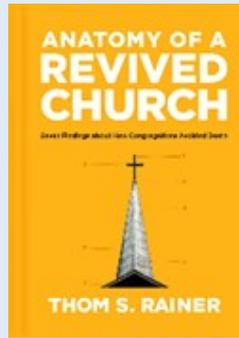


# Revitalisation: An invitation to live, but how?

Around the western world, there is a concern amongst many Christians, that Christian congregations are closing at a greater rate than new ones beginning. Combined with this is what many call the decline of Christianity, for instance in Australia in 1971 86.29% of the population (or 11.03 million people) identified as Christians, by 2021 43.9% of the population (11.4 million people) identified as Christians. In our Lutheran Australian circles many of us are experiencing this decline. Yet despite this big picture of decline all is not doom and gloom, there are real examples of local congregations in Australia, USA and UK, who are not only surviving but also thriving.

One organization that explores how congregations are surviving and thriving is Church Answers, headed by Thom and Sam Rainer. In Thom's book the *Anatomy of a Revived Church* he shares with us 7 key factors of congregations that have moved from heading towards death to being the living body of Christ in their local communities.

These 7 factors are: Accepting Responsibility; Overcoming the Traps of Tradition; Expanding the scorecard (Counting what is important); Committing to Powerful Prayer; Dealing with Toxins; Seeking Silver Bullets No More; and Choosing meaningful membership.



He also identifies 10 behaviours of revitalised congregations. They include worship style that is not around member's personal preferences but what is best for the whole congregation and their context. Running meetings, programs and budgets that are focused on the Great Commission and Greatest Commandments. Focus on facilities that see them as tools of connecting with the community and making disciples.

Revitalised congregation members see that they are called to live more to provide ministry and care to others than receive ministry and care. They live to serve rather than to be served. They stop being angry and blaming, and instead encourage and look for ways to help. Members focus on growing as evangelists and sharing their faith, being concerned that those they encounter know connect with Jesus and His community. Members are open to change and are willing to embrace change for the sake of the Great Commission and Greatest Commandments.

*Anatomy of a Revived Church* is an ideal personal, congregational or church council study. Each chapter dives deeper into the above factors and behaviours, with questions for reflection and discussion.

Pr Richard Schwedes

## District Prayer Calendar

nswact.lca.org.au

To join the NSW and ACT District Intercessors Prayer List, email Kaye office.nsw@lca.org.au



I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and people, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all — the testimony given in its proper time.

1 Timothy 2:1-6

|       |    | <b>Parishes/<br/>Congregations</b> | <b>Pastors &amp; Church Workers<br/>(and family)</b>                                                                                           | <b>Locations</b>                                         |
|-------|----|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| March | 5  | Bass Hill Finnish                  | <b>Pr Lassi Pappinen</b> (Iida, Sylvi, Taimi)                                                                                                  | Sydney Finnish                                           |
|       | 12 | Campbelltown                       | <b>Pr Hans Peethala</b> Cynderella, Ethan, Yarmiyah, Carissa                                                                                   | Good Shepherd Campbelltown                               |
|       | 19 | Central Coast                      | <b>Pr Allan Taruste</b> (Tina, Matthew, Scarlet)                                                                                               | St Matthew's Woy Woy                                     |
| April | 26 | Chinese (Mandarin)                 | <b>Matthew Wan</b>                                                                                                                             | Sydney Hills District                                    |
|       | 2  | Estonian                           | <b>Pr Allan Taruste</b> (Tina, Matthew, Scarlet)                                                                                               | St John's Estonian Sydney                                |
|       | 9  | German                             | <b>Pr Christian Hohl</b> (Ute)                                                                                                                 | Martin Luther Sydney                                     |
|       | 16 | Indonesian                         | <b>Pr Sahat Simanullang</b> (Nuritalia, Paskalis, Givendiau)                                                                                   | Indonesian Yagoona                                       |
|       | 23 | Latvian                            | <b>Pr Colvin MacPherson</b> (Linda)                                                                                                            | Sydney Latvian                                           |
| May   | 30 | LifeWay                            | <b>Pr Mark Schultz</b> (Jo-Anne, Anna, Alex, Georgia)<br><b>Pr Mark Simpfendorfer</b> (Kaye, Joshua, Dylan)<br><b>Pr Francis Leung</b> (Peggy) | LifeWay Epping<br>LifeWay Chinese                        |
|       | 7  | LifeWay                            | <b>Pr Mathew von Stanke</b> (Elise, Lily, Aaron, Noah)                                                                                         | LifeWay Newcastle                                        |
|       | 14 | LifeWay                            | <b>Pr David Schuppan</b> (Barbara)                                                                                                             | LifeWay Nowra<br>LifeWay Oak Flats<br>LifeWay Wollongong |
|       | 21 | LifeWay                            | <b>Danny Brock</b> , Church planter (Michelle, Dylan, Cody)                                                                                    | LifeWay Westside                                         |
|       | 28 | Liverpool                          | <b>Pr Hans Peethala</b> Cynderella, Ethan, Yarmiyah, Carissa                                                                                   | Living Waters Liverpool                                  |

## Walking together IN MISSION

### a Bible Study series

#### God's Grace is too Lavish! Jonah 4

Join with members of the LCA NSW and ACT District in the next online Bible study led by Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus

**Wednesday 22 March, 7.30pm  
on Zoom**

To register,  
please email Kaye  
[office.nsw@lca.org.au](mailto:office.nsw@lca.org.au)



## Upcoming Events

- March 17** **St Paul's College 75th Anniversary**  
St Paul's College Walla Walla
- March 17 - 19** **LWNSW & ACT Retreat**  
Warrambui, *Women of all ages*
- March 22** **'Walking Together' Bible Study**  
Zoom online meeting
- April 14 - 16** **Pastors' and Layworkers' Wives Retreat**  
Campbelltown
- April 22 - 25** **Young Adults Retreat**  
Talbingo Mountain Retreat, *Ages 16+*
- April 29** **LWNSW & ACT Convention**  
Bethlehem, Jindera
- June 13-15** **Mission and Ministry Conference**  
Warrambui

LCA NSW&ACT MISSION AND MINISTRY CONFERENCE

## Connecting to Connect

Pastors, Lay workers, Staff,  
Congregational and Ministry leaders

**13th to 15th June 2023**

**Warrambui Conference Centre**

Registration and full program will be  
available April 2023



A SIMPLE WAY YOUR CHURCH CAN CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION AND TAKE  
A PRACTICAL STEP TOWARDS A GREENER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

- 100% PLANT BASED (SUGARCANE)
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- ZERO CARBON FOOTPRINT
- FITS STANDARD COMMUNION TRAYS
- WAFERS AND WINE ALSO AVAILABLE!
- SCAN FOR VIDEO & INFO

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## Contact Newsletter

Published 4 times each year  
by the NSW & ACT District of  
the Lutheran Church of Australia

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[www.lcansw.org.au](http://www.lcansw.org.au)

## LCA COMPLAINTS

Many complaints can be resolved before lasting hurt is caused, by addressing them quickly in a non-threatening manner and by raising the issue directly with the relevant person or organization in a thoughtful and courteous manner. If this is not applicable or possible in your situation, you may lodge a complaint with the Professional Standards Department in any of the following ways:

Phone the freecall number 1800 644 628  
Email [complaints@lca.org.au](mailto:complaints@lca.org.au)  
or write to  
Confidential, PO Box 519,  
Marden SA 5070

## Assisting regional people coming to Sydney

If you are coming to Sydney for hospitalization and require pastoral care, or if you know someone moving to Sydney for work or study, please let your pastor know. You can also contact District Office and we will endeavor to put you in touch with a pastor who may be able to visit.  
District Office 02 8660 1200

