



# #realunitingchurch

## Report from Calvary Presbytery



*[caption] Calvary Presbytery, Aurukun elders (2014)*

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### Context

Calvary Presbytery is the regional body of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) in Queensland.

The Presbytery has oversight of seven Indigenous congregations.

In the Cape York and Gulf of Carpentaria region:

- Mapoon
- Napranum
- Aurukun
- Mornington Island.

In urban/rural locations:

- Gordonvale
- Townsville West End
- Zillmere, Brisbane.

The Presbytery is strongly committed to a covenant relationship with the wider Uniting Church.

## Congregational life

The focus of the Presbytery continues to be support for the congregations, their local leaders and communities. The congregations of Calvary are faithful, Christ-centred, and connected strongly with their communities.

**Mornington Island** has had an emphasis in the last year on working with local community agencies and organising activities for children and youth. Young people have participated in NCYC and Easter Madness. The current vacancy at Mornington Island hopefully will be filled by next year. The church building is being refurbished.

**Aurukun** has had a spiritual revival this year. We rejoice in the work of the Holy Spirit in that community. Many people (adults and children) have been baptised and now join in regular worship, both at church and at home fellowship meetings. There has been a lessening of conflict in the community which can be attributed in large part to the work of the Spirit. The lay church elders have provided faithful leadership and we give thanks to God for their energy and commitment.

**Napranum** is currently awaiting the appointment of a minister. The placement is to be filled by a minister from Fiji, who is still waiting for his visa application to be approved.

Rev Craig Mishewski is minister for the **Mapoon** community. He is half-time in this role and half-time with the Weipa Anglican-Uniting Cooperating Parish. The Mapoon congregation is a small group of children and youth. Craig also provides pastoral support to the whole community and volunteers in the Mapoon school.

The **Gordonvale** congregation, Eternal Life Fellowship, is a small group that has been supported for many years by Pastor Bill Hollingsworth. Bill is not able to provide direct assistance these days, so the elders exercise responsibility for leadership, for which we give thanks.

In **Townsville**, Rev Dennis Corowa combines his congregational ministry with prison and Blue Care chaplaincy. He is half-time Presbytery Minister.

**Zillmere** congregation is expanding under the oversight of Rev Saimoni Davui's ministry. He is well supported by committed lay leaders and the congregation is exploring with UnitingCare ways of providing consistent support to people who leave prison and others in need in the local community.

## Priorities

Noting the Synod's priority of youth, children, and families, Calvary congregations are developing a greater focus around youth and children's ministry. A major task is to produce culturally appropriate Christian education materials for use in our congregations.

We are encouraging emerging lay leaders to take up ministry and theology studies. Presently there are five students enrolled at Nungalinga College in Darwin and one at Trinity College. The

commitment of lay leaders in our congregations has been vital in their growth and committed discipleship.

## Highlights

The highlight over the last year has been the spiritual revival of the community of Aurukun. The challenge is to nurture the growth of mature Christian commitment and discipleship, and help sustain a unified congregation and reconciled community. This will be helped by the placement of a ministry agent at Aurukun when accommodation is obtained.

## Covenanting

We are constantly blessed by the encouragement and support we receive from the wider church's backing of its covenant relationship with Congress. For example, the Faith Works Uniting Community congregation were recently able to provide additional funding needed to proceed with the costly renovations to the Mornington Island church building. Presbyteries and the Synod in solidarity have been able to support Calvary's ongoing costs of ministry.

There is a desire on the part of the Presbytery to develop stronger covenant relationships between congregations. Organising opportunities for cultural exchange, visitations and other activities is a task that needs more resources than the Presbytery can offer. We believe that a covenanting officer position within the Synod and in partnership with Calvary Presbytery would help facilitate engagement.

## Challenges

Going forward, resourcing ministry is a considerable challenge for the Indigenous congregations and Presbytery. This applies particularly to capital resources. Once the Mornington Island renovations are complete, Calvary has no financial capital resources of its own with which to meet ongoing needs such as building a manse at Aurukun and ongoing repairs and maintenance requirements. A new approach to capital funding for First People's ministry is required.

We are awaiting the outcome of the Assembly's appeal for money to build a new church at Mapoon.

## Proposal

It is proposed that the 33rd Synod receive this report.

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