



Study into Effective Church Planting in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney

Prepared by:

Dr John Bellamy, Byron Kemp & Braden Compton

Anglicare Diocese of Sydney, Social Policy and Research Unit

June 2015

Acknowledgments

This study was commissioned by the Strategic Research Group (SRG) of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, which is chaired by the Archbishop of Sydney, The Most Rev. Glenn Davies. We wish to acknowledge the role of the SRG in developing the research questions examined in this study, for support at various stages of the project and for feedback on the draft report.

Thanks go to Scott Sanders of Geneva Push, for his advice and generously making available literature review, assessment and other related material.

We acknowledge the following Social Policy & Research Unit staff for their contribution to the report:

- Zoe Paleologos for interviews carried out with Peter and Elizabeth Wood and Nima Neyshaboury
- Sue King, Director, for review of the draft report.

Interviewees for this Study

A key source of information for this study has been church leaders who have been on the frontline of church planting in the Diocese. The following people generously took part in interviews for this study:

Rev Rod Cocking, Rector, Eastgardens Parish
Rev Stuart Crawshaw, Senior Minister, Soul Revival Church (Kirrawee)
Rev Dr Paul Dale, Rector, Kirribilli
Rev Bruce Hall, Director, Evangelism and New Churches (ENC) and Acting Rector, St Philip's Auburn
Rev Matt Heazlewood, Rector, Killara Parish and Philadelphia Anglican Church
Rev Paul James, Rector, Beverly Hills with Kingsgrove Parish
Rev Phillip Jensen, Bible Teacher and Evangelist with Two Ways Ministries, and former Dean of Sydney at St Andrews Cathedral
Rev Andrew Katay, Rector, Ashfield, Five Dock and Haberfield Parish and CEO, City to City Australia
Rev Michael Kellahan, Rector, Roseville East Parish
Rev David Lim, Assistant Minister, Naremburn/Cammeray Parish
Rev Toby Neal, Lead Pastor, Vine Church (Surry Hills)
Mr Nima Neyshaboury, Pastor, Iranian Christian Church of Sydney, Carlingford & North Rocks Parish
Rev David O'Mara, Rector, Sadleir Parish
Rev Matt Paterson, Fellowship Leader, Living Water Community Fellowship (Redfern)
Rev Wayne Pickford, Fellowship Leader, Berkeley Life Centre
Rev Ian Powell, Hon. Assistant Minister, Annandale Parish
Mrs Elizabeth Wood, Administrator and Pastoral Support, Ropes Crossing Church
Rev Peter Wood, Assistant Minister, St Mary's Parish and Ropes Crossing Church
Rev Carson Wu, Assistant Minister, Killara Parish and Philadelphia Anglican Church

© Anglicare Diocese of Sydney, 2015

Enquiries regarding this study should be directed to:

Dr John Bellamy
Senior Researcher
Social Policy & Research Unit
Anglicare Diocese of Sydney
PO Box 427
Parramatta, NSW, 2124
E: research@anglicare.org.au
T: 98958000

Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	7
1.1 Overview of this Report.....	7
1.2 Defining Church Planting.....	8
1.3 Study Method.....	8
2. Church Planting in the Diocese	10
2.1 Identifying the Primary Models of Church Planting	10
2.2 Models of Church Planting Implemented in the Diocese.....	12
2.3 Period of Commencement	13
2.4 Location of Church Plants.....	14
2.5 Buildings	15
3. Performance of Church Planting Models in the Diocese	16
3.1 Church Plant Survival.....	16
3.2 What Does Success Look Like?	17
3.3 Levels of Newcomers.....	18
3.4 Growth in Attendance	20
3.5 Financial Viability.....	21
3.6 <i>Mission 2020</i> Indicators.....	21
4. Factors that Contribute to Success or Failure of Church Plants	24
4.1 Church Planter – Intrinsic Qualities	24
4.2 Church Planter – On the Job.....	26
4.3 The Church Planting Team.....	28
4.4 Vision and Direction	29
4.5 Location of the Church Plant	29
4.6 Contextually Appropriate Meetings and Outreach	31
4.7 Being Part of the Community	33
4.8 Welcoming and Follow-up Processes.....	34
4.9 Partnerships and Support Networks	34
4.10 Finances.....	35
4.11 Reasons that Church Plants Fail	36

5. Parishes that Plant Churches	38
5.1 Key Enablers	38
5.2 Impacts on the Mother Church	39
6. Diocesan Support for Church Planting.....	42
6.1 Recruitment, Coaching and Training	42
6.2 Strategic Planning and Coordination.....	42
6.3 Conflict Resolution	43
6.4 Funding Sources for Church Plants.....	44
7. Conclusions	46
7.1 Which Church Plants have Gone Well or Folded?.....	46
7.2 How Successful has each Church Planting Model been?	46
7.3 What Factors Contribute to Church Plants Succeeding or Folding?	48
7.4 What are Key Enablers for Parishes to Engage in Church Planting?	49
7.5 The Role of the Diocese in Church Planting	49
8. Recommendations	50
References	51

Executive Summary

Over many years, parishes across the Diocese have been involved in establishing new churches and new congregations, including congregations for Non-English Speaking Background people. As part of the new Diocesan Mission, *Mission 2020*, two goals have been set for the planting of 15 new churches in 'Greenfields' areas and at least two new churches per Mission Area by 2020.

Given the history and importance of church planting, the Strategic Research Group (SRG), chaired by the Archbishop of Sydney, commissioned a research study into the effectiveness of church planting in the Diocese. This report provides the findings of this study.

The purpose of the study has been to investigate church planting in the Diocese since 2001, by addressing four primary research questions:

1. Which church plants have gone well and which church plants have folded?
2. What are different models of church planting and how successful has each model been in the Diocese?
3. What are the factors that contribute to a successful church plant and what contributes to a church plant folding?
4. What are the key enablers for parishes to engage in church planting?

The study is based on an analysis of National Church Life Survey and other data, analysis of interviews carried out among people who have been involved in church planting and a review of church planting literature.

Models of Church Planting in the Diocese

The study has identified five basic models of church planting in the Diocese: Pioneering church plants, Mother-daughter church plants, Repotted churches, Non-English Speaking Background/Aboriginal congregations, and New church services. Only seven Pioneering and eight Repotted churches were identified that had commenced during 2002-14. More common were Mother-daughter church plants and NESB/Aboriginal congregations with more than 60 of each type being identified. The most common model of church planting has been the establishment of New church services; it is estimated that up to 400 new services have commenced during 2002-2011.

Which Church Plants Have Gone Well or Folded?

Survival rate: Around 60% of Mother-daughter church plants and 70% of NESB/Aboriginal and New church services that commenced during 2002–14 remain in operation. All of the Pioneering and Repotted churches identified in the study remain open.

Commencements: There is evidence that the rate of commencement for off-site church plants and NESB/Aboriginal congregations has slowed since 2011.

How Successful Has Each Church Planting Model Been?

Missional impact: It was found that average levels of newcomers and individual missional activity at off-site and NESB/Aboriginal church plants generally exceeded Diocesan averages. On average, Pioneering and NESB congregations had the highest levels of newcomers and NESB congregations had more than double the Diocesan average of *first-time* newcomers. Nevertheless the study found a wide variation in newcomer levels among Mother-daughter church plants and only average levels among a sample of attenders of New church services, suggesting varying degrees of missional impact.

Financial viability and attendance growth: There is evidence that many off-site church plants have relatively low attendances, with about half of Mother-daughter church plants having less than 70 attenders (adults and children). It is likely that many Mother-daughter church plants receive continuing support within the parish structure. Financial viability is an ongoing issue for Pioneering church plants which maintain support from a variety of sources.

Comparison of models: The report identifies that Mother-daughter church plants are easier to implement than Pioneering or Repotting models, but that failure rates among Mother-daughter churches are higher. NESB congregations have particular requirements around implementation that make them harder to establish than conventional church services, with around 70% surviving. There is a need to promote best-practice among parishes to increase the likely survival of church plants, especially Mother-daughter church plants.

What Factors Contribute to Church Plants Succeeding or Folding?

The report outlines a wide range of factors that contribute to the success of church plants. Primary factors include:

1. The church planting leader: The leader should be an evangelist with a passion for reaching the Lost, an innovator and with a relational approach to leadership. For NESB congregations, the leader's ethnicity is a key factor. What the church planter does 'on the job' can affect success including being fully available for the task, being a good communicator, seizing opportunities and perseverance.

2. People who support the leader: The launch or core team needs to have the same convictions about mission as the leader and commitment to making the church plant succeed. There needs to be an agreed vision between the leader and core team about what it is they want to achieve. A range of gifts and skills are needed, covering central functions: outreach, worship, children's program, finance and property. Ideally the core team should have at least 30 adults. For the leader, spousal support is critical and mentoring or coaching is important to ongoing success.

3. Contextualising the church plant's ministry and mission: The church plant should be undertaken for missional reasons with a target group/locality clearly defined. Culturally appropriate church services, meetings (eg. around meals) and outreach must be developed. The profile of the church plant in the wider community needs to be increased and effective connections made with the target group/local community (eg. through participation in community events, practical service). Appropriate systems for keeping track of attendance and timely follow-up are beneficial.

4. Partnerships and financial viability: Successful church planting requires a host parish and/or supporters in order to become established and sustainable. A firm financial footing is a key factor.

The report outlines how each model of off-site church planting carries with it the potential for conflict. Ongoing communication between stakeholders is needed, both before and after the establishment of the church plant, with the aim of each party recognising the other as a partner in mission.

What are Key Enablers for Parishes to Engage in Church Planting?

Key conditions that need to be present before churches engage in church planting include theological and missional outlook; a sufficiently large and diverse sending congregation that can recover from the loss of a leader and launch team; a generous culture that is prepared to support and partner with the church plant into the future.

The experience of church planting can encourage or discourage a parish from attempting further planting. The interviews revealed examples of churches that have been affected by bad experiences of church planting. However, on average, churches that have planted off-site church plants had healthy *Mission 2020* baseline indicators and average weekly attendances much higher than the Diocesan mean.

The Role of the Diocese in Church Planting

Areas for expanding the role: Apart from its significant role in purchasing sites for new churches in 'Greenfields' locations, the Diocese currently plays a supporting role for church planting in existing urban areas, through the Evangelism & New Churches (ENC) agency. This report has canvassed how the role of the Diocese could be extended in the areas of recruitment and training of church planters, identification of church planting opportunities and strategic planning at a regional level, identification of resources and assets to assist church planting, conflict resolution and assistance in fundraising. Consideration could be given to expanding the role and resourcing of ENC to address each of these areas, as well as enhancing the current role of ENC in promoting and maintaining church plants.

Funding of church planting: An issue raised in study interviews is the potential role of the Diocese in funding church planting in existing urban areas. Key areas identified where support is needed are some of the capital costs associated with Pioneering church plants and some of the recurrent or occasional costs associated with church plants targeting disadvantaged and particular ethnic groups. Apart from direct funding, a range of indirect funding initiatives have been suggested that could also be explored.

Recommendations

The report makes several key recommendations for consideration by the Diocesan leadership, which are found in section 8 of the report.

1. Introduction

In 2014 the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney adopted the new Diocesan Mission, *Mission 2020*. The vision adopted by the Synod is to “see Christ honoured as Lord in every community” and the mission that “we commit ourselves afresh, in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, to glorify God and love our neighbour by proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ, calling people to repent and living lives worthy of him.”

Two of the 10 goals adopted to achieve this vision and mission relate directly to church planting. In order to respond to the changing face of our society the Diocese aims to:

- plant 15 new churches in greenfield areas by 2020, and
- plant at least two new churches per mission area by 2020.

Church planting is by no means a new strategy in the Diocese. Population growth in the post-War period has seen Sydney and other metropolitan areas expand rapidly, requiring the purchase of sites and the establishment of new churches on the suburban fringe. In more recent times, State Government urban consolidation policies have seen low density residential development and industrial and commercial sites replaced by medium density and high rise residential development, increasing the populations of older inner and middle ring suburbs of Sydney. This has led to the recognition of the need for ‘Brownfields’ church planting and the revitalisation of parishes in existing urban areas.

The previous Diocesan Mission, which commenced in 2002, had as a central strategy to *multiply Bible-based Christian fellowships, congregations and churches*. As a result there was an upsurge in church planting across the Diocese in the following years. Parishes across the Diocese have been involved in establishing new churches, re-establishing congregations in previously closed church buildings, locating congregations in schools and other non-church buildings and commencing new congregations alongside those at existing church centres. A large number of new congregations have been established for Non-English Speaking Background people, including Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian, Indonesian and Sudanese people.

Given this recent history and the continuing importance of church planting as part of the Diocesan Mission, the Strategic Research Group (SRG) of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, chaired by the Archbishop of Sydney, commissioned a research study into the effectiveness of church planting in the Diocese. This report provides the findings of that study which commenced at the end of 2014.

1.1 Overview of this Report

The purpose of the study has been to investigate church planting in the Diocese since 2001, by addressing four primary research questions:

1. Which church plants have gone well and which church plants have folded?
2. What are different models of church planting and how successful has each model been in the Diocese?
3. What are the factors that contribute to a successful church plant and what contributes to a church plant folding?
4. What are the key enablers for parishes to engage in church planting?

This report outlines findings of the study for each research question and sheds light on the effectiveness of church planting in the Diocese. The study provides evidence that will:

- a) Assist in deciding the best way for the Diocese to support church planting, a key part of the Diocesan Mission
- b) Assist parishes and agencies in developing best practice approaches to church planting.

The research complements other recent work on church planting in the Diocese including the *Report from the Church Planting Taskforce into the Church Planting Plans towards 2050* (Church Planting Taskforce, 2014) and *Church Planting in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney – Results of Survey of Parish Rectors* (Bellamy and Kemp, 2014)

1.2 Defining Church Planting

A simple definition of church planting is *mission carried out by forming faith communities* (Hopkins and White, 1995, 3). This definition captures two important concepts:

- That church planting has a mission emphasis
- That it essentially involves the creation of new entities.

The previous Diocesan Mission articulated a broad definition of church planting that includes “fellowships, congregations and churches”. Following this approach, this study includes the commencement of new congregations (church services) at existing church centres, as well as the establishment of churches at new locations.

1.3 Study Method

The study has involved a mixed methods approach:

- Quantitative research, comprising analysis of National Church Life Survey (NCLS) and other data sources
- Qualitative research, comprising interviews with the leaders of previous or current church plants or rectors with oversight of church plants.

1.3.1 Literature Review

A literature review was carried out to:

- Gain a better understanding of broader scholarship and practice surrounding church planting;
- Inform the development of the interview schedule.

The church planting literature is a subset of a much larger church growth literature. In order to keep the review process manageable, the literature review generally included:

- church planting literature only
- church planting references from the last 15 years
- literature that is evidence based.

The list of references has been compiled from searches of Australian Catholic University library databases, Moore College library databases, Google and Google Scholar, as well as bibliographies within identified texts.

1.3.2 Data Analysis

In addressing the first and second research questions in the study, several data and information sources have been analysed:

- 2006 and 2011 National Church Life Survey databases
- Church Planting Taskforce Survey of Parish Rectors
- 2013 & 2014 Year Book for the Diocese of Sydney
- Parish websites.

1.3.3 Interviews

Interviews have been carried out with 19 individuals, from lists compiled by the Bishops and Director of Evangelism and New Churches (ENC). The interview schedules particularly addressed Research Questions 2, 3 and 4 and represent the primary source of information for these last two research questions.

Interviewees have given consent to their names being attached to statements or quotes in the report. Where appropriate, surnames of interviewees appear in square brackets [] after such statements or quotes.

2. Church Planting in the Diocese

2.1 Identifying the Primary Models of Church Planting

There are two broad church planting streams that appear in the literature: *Pioneering* and *Reproduction* (Ott & Wilson 2011, 127-144; Keller, 2009). These two streams roughly equate to what is found in New Testament times; for instance, the Apostle Paul established a pioneering church through gospel proclamation and the new church later reproduced by forming other house churches within that city (Chester 2000, 38; Ott & Wilson 2011, 127).

There is no standard taxonomy for describing models of church planting, but a review of various approaches in the literature reveals common categories, which are described below.

2.1.1 Pioneering Church Plants

The first stream, the **Pioneering approach**, involves establishing a church where there may be none in the immediate area or among the target group. There may be no core membership initially, the church being formed through evangelism and recruitment from the wider community (Keller 2009; Conn 1997). The church planter disciples the believers as the new 'core' of the church. The pioneering model is the most difficult to implement as it commences with little or no support from another church elsewhere. Sub-types of the pioneering approach are:

- A new church is established by an itinerant church planter, who raises up local leaders and then moves on to repeat the process elsewhere
- A church is established by a church planter who then stays long-term, training others who in turn establish other congregations or go on to pioneer elsewhere.

This type of work requires exceptionally gifted and flexible church planters, who can successfully transition through the multiple roles they must play as the church matures and its needs evolve (Stetzer 2006, 100-104).

2.1.2 Church Reproduction

The second stream, the **Church Reproduction approach**, involves a new church being commenced by a core of members from an existing church elsewhere. Evangelism and the training of co-workers may be minimal in this approach; the church planter may simply replicate the mother church without much adaptation (Conn 1997).

There are several different models within the Church Reproduction stream in the literature, including the following models (Ott & Wilson 2011, 134; Keller 2009; Conn 1997; Assemblies of God 2004; Bustle & Crocker 2010; Weldy 2007; Dadswell & Ross 2013, 18-26):

- **Mother-daughter church plant** – This model involves a church (termed a 'daughter church') being started elsewhere by another church (the 'mother church'). The leader of the new church plant is appointed by the mother church and members and resources initially come from the mother church. The mother church often nurtures the daughter church to maturity and potential independence. A variation on this approach is two or more mother churches contributing people and resources to a single daughter church.
- **Church replant (or 'repotting')** – A struggling church is revitalised by contributions of people and resources from a larger church, or a church is planted into another church that is still operating. This differs from an amalgamation of two previously viable churches or churches making an equal contribution of people and resources.

- **Church planting among a people group** – A new congregation is established among a particular ethnic group, social grouping or interest group. The church plant may be pioneering, mother-daughter or repotting in mode. It is common for such new congregations to share the church building of another congregation.
- **Multi-site or satellite model** – This model involves a church establishing new venues in the surrounding region but these satellites will always remain tied organisationally to the main church.
- **Small group or house church network** – This model involves the formation of small groups or house churches which then associate as a network. House churches and small groups often multiply by cell division, with the church planter playing the role of an equipper-coach of lay leaders. Some house churches or small groups may then join together to form a new congregation.

Table 1
Description of Primary Church Planting Models

Church Planting Model	Description
Pioneering	A church commenced with little or no support from churches elsewhere
Mother-Daughter	A church started by another church at a new location
Repotting	An existing church revitalised by people and resources from another church elsewhere
People group (eg. people born in non-English speaking countries)	A new congregation established among a particular ethnic or social grouping
Multi-site or Satellite	New sites established by a church that remain part of that church
House church network	The formation of small groups or house churches which then form a network

The literature also refers to regional church planting strategies which involve denominations or large churches establishing multiple new sites in strategic locations. These may be Pioneering or Reproduction models of church. Regional strategies include establishing a cluster of churches in a limited area, planting churches in consecutive towns along major transport routes, and seeking to establish at least one new church in unevangelised towns (Ott & Wilson 2011, 145; Bustle & Crocker 2010).

Another approach to classifying church plants focuses on the characteristics of the church's life rather than the organisational structure or history of establishment. For instance, Rainey (2005) classifies church plants

as program-based or 'traditional', seeker focussed, purpose-driven, ministry-based, relationally-based, or house churches. Such a schema would be difficult to implement and so has not been pursued in the current research.

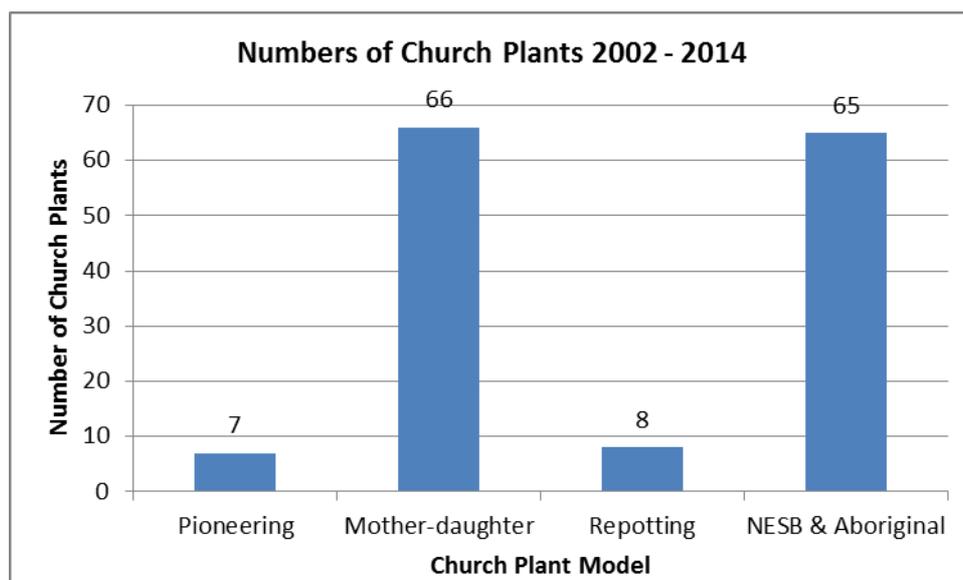
2.2 Models of Church Planting Implemented in the Diocese

The focus of this study is upon church plants that commenced from 2002 onwards. This period coincides with the commencement of the previous Mission of the Diocese following the Synod in October 2002. The central strategy for this Mission was the multiplication of churches, congregations and fellowships, which saw an upsurge in church planting across the Diocese in the following years.

2.2.1 Off-site Church Plants and NESB Congregations

Figure 1 shows the number of separate church planting entities identified as having commenced in the Diocese during this period, comprising four of the six church planting models described in Table 1: **Pioneering, Mother-daughter, Repotting and Non-English Speaking Background/Aboriginal congregations**. The last group is almost wholly comprised of NESB congregations, with very few Aboriginal congregations having been identified. Of these four models, the Mother-daughter and NESB/Aboriginal are by far the most common, with 66 and 65 entities identified respectively. Seven examples of the Pioneering model and eight of the Repotting model were identified. No examples of the **Satellite** model or **House Church networks** have been identified.

Figure 1



The primary sources for identifying these church plants were the 2006 and 2011 National Church Life Surveys, Diocesan Year Books, Church Planting Taskforce Parish Survey and parish websites. In order to distinguish Pioneering, Mother-daughter and Repotted churches, many parishes were contacted directly to confirm the history of establishment of their congregations. Although this has been a thorough approach, it is likely that some church plants will still have slipped through the net. These may be church plants that were open for a short period and were not detected through surveys. Others may be church plants that have commenced since the most recent surveys. Such church plants will need to be added to the future record.

It is important to recognise that the study does not cover *all* contemporary church plants in the Diocese. Existing churches are included or excluded from the study depending upon their year of commencement, not just their history. Many successful church plants were established in the 1990s and early 2000s, including a number of mother-daughter churches planted by St Matthias, Centennial Park, churches in the

Naremburn/ Cammeray parish that were reported by St Thomas' North Sydney and the Cantonese-speaking congregation established in the Hurstville Parish. These church plants, however, were commenced prior to 2002 and so have not been included in the study.

2.2.2 New Church Services

As mentioned earlier, the definition of church planting used in the Diocese can include the on-site commencement of new church services. For this reason the establishment of new church services has been included as a fifth model of church planting in this study.

A source of information about new services is the 2006 and 2011 NCLS, where parish staff who completed the Operations Survey were asked to identify any church services that had been commenced in the previous five years at their church. About 300 new services were identified across the two surveys. Therefore based on church participation rates in the NCLS, it is estimated that up to 400 new services have commenced between 2002 and 2011. New church services are thus the most common form of church planting in the Diocese. A previous survey of parish rectors also found high levels of commencement of new church services; the survey found that 68% of survey respondents had been involved in establishing new church services since 2001, compared with 28% involved in other models of church planting (Bellamy & Kemp, 2014, 5).

It should be noted, however, that it has not been possible to refine this NCLS data to remove spurious cases. For instance a simple alteration to the starting time of a service may have led to that service being counted as a 'new' service by the survey respondent. Some services commenced prior to 2001 may also have been accidentally included by respondents to the 2006 survey. Nevertheless a sample of new church services and their attenders for this study, which is discussed in section 3.6 below, has been checked to exclude spurious cases.

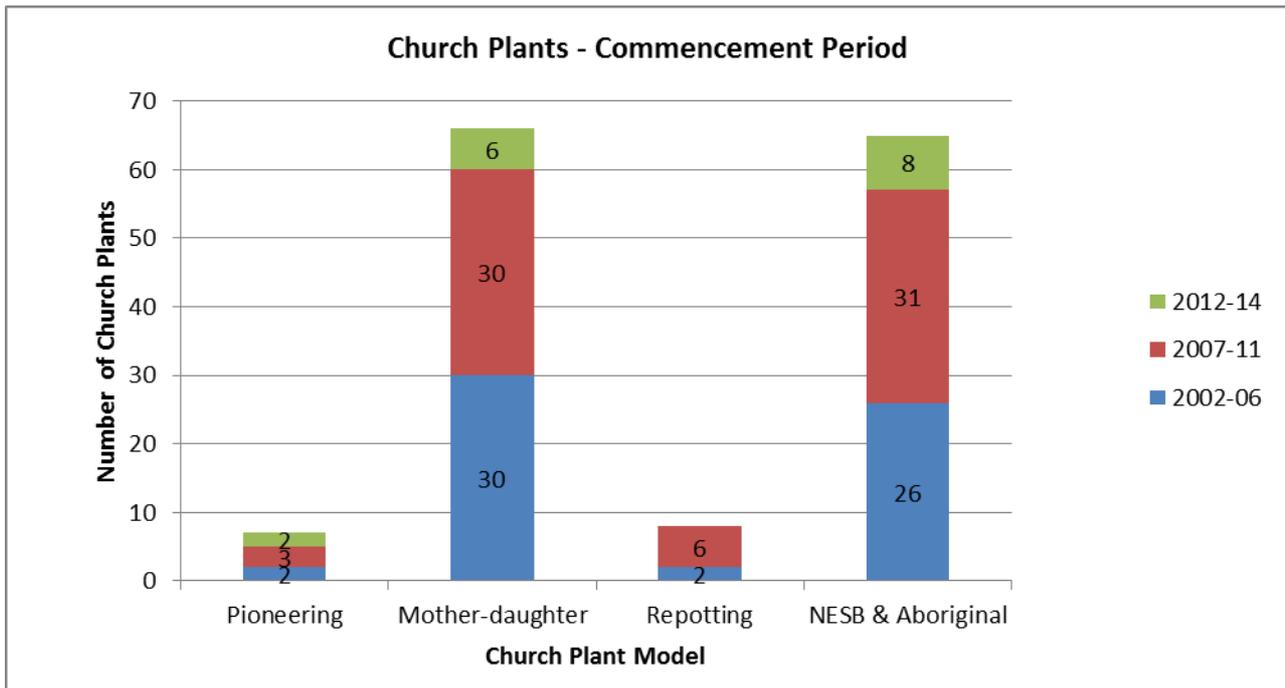
Little is known about the history of establishment of these services generally, including the extent to which new services are an expression of outreach to the wider community; whether services are targeted to a particular demographic or are heterogeneous; whether services are formed by small numbers of people from other services or through splitting an existing congregation in two; whether services meet in the main church building, in a hall or elsewhere on the site; how well resourced the new services are in terms of staff, lay leaders and musical resources.

2.3 Period of Commencement

Church plants have been classified according to whether they commenced in 2002-06, 2007-11 or 2012-14. (The years 2006 and 2011 are those in which the National Church Life Survey was carried out). Figure 2 shows that similar numbers of church plants were established in 2002-06 compared with 2007-11. Even allowing for the fact that 2012-14 is only a three year period compared with five years for the other time periods, Figure 2 shows that the rate of church planting commencements has slowed markedly in 2012-14, with far fewer church plants being launched than in previous periods.

New church services have followed a similar pattern to off-site and NESB/Aboriginal church plants. NCLS data shows that about 50% of new services were commenced in the 2002-06 period and 50% in the 2007-11 period. Due to the absence of data, it is unknown whether the rate of establishment of new church services has also slowed in 2012-14.

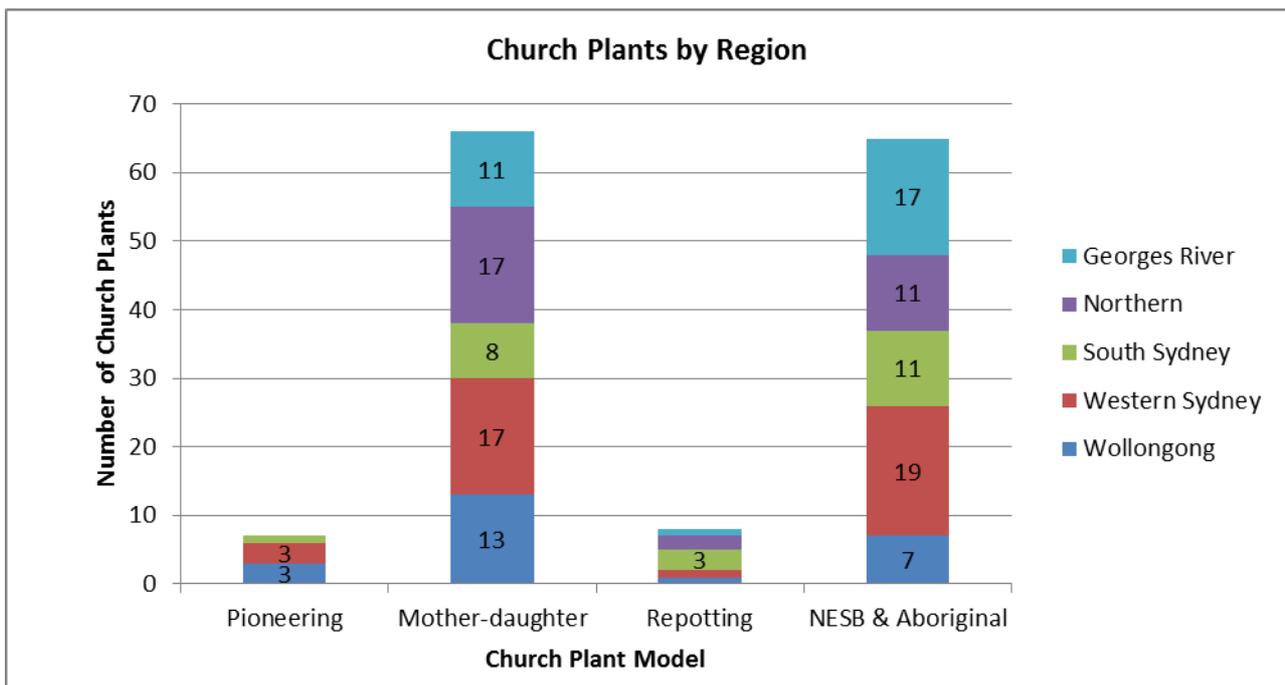
Figure 2



2.4 Location of Church Plants

Figure 3 shows that the various models of church planting are widespread across the regions of the Diocese. The highest numbers of NESB congregations are located in the Georges River and Western Sydney regions, reflecting the diverse, multi-cultural demographics of these regions. Mother-daughter church plants are most numerous in the Northern, Western Sydney and Wollongong regions.

Figure 3

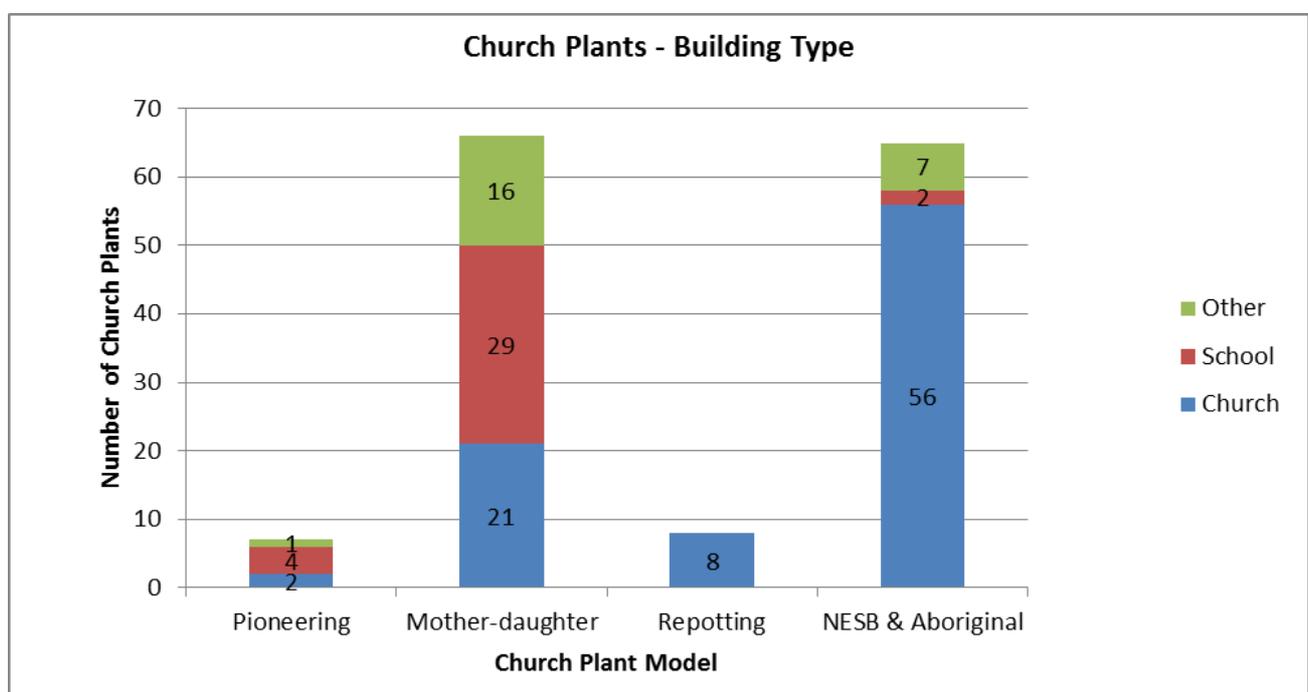


2.5 Buildings

Figure 4 shows the types of building occupied by church plants. By far the most common type of building occupied by NESB congregations are church buildings, reflecting the sharing of facilities between NESB congregations and other Anglo or heterogeneous congregations meeting in the parish.

By comparison, more than two-thirds of Mother-daughter church plants are located in school buildings or other community facilities such as community centres, retirement villages and universities. This often reflects the intentional establishment of the daughter church in an area away from the mother church, to provide better local access to a congregation or in order to target a particular demographic or social grouping. For instance some daughter churches are based in schools partly with the intention of connecting with that particular school community. By comparison daughter churches located in church buildings are usually commenced from a desire to re-establish an Anglican presence in that part of the parish, within a disused property already owned by the parish.

Figure 4



3. Performance of Church Planting Models in the Diocese

3.1 Church Plant Survival

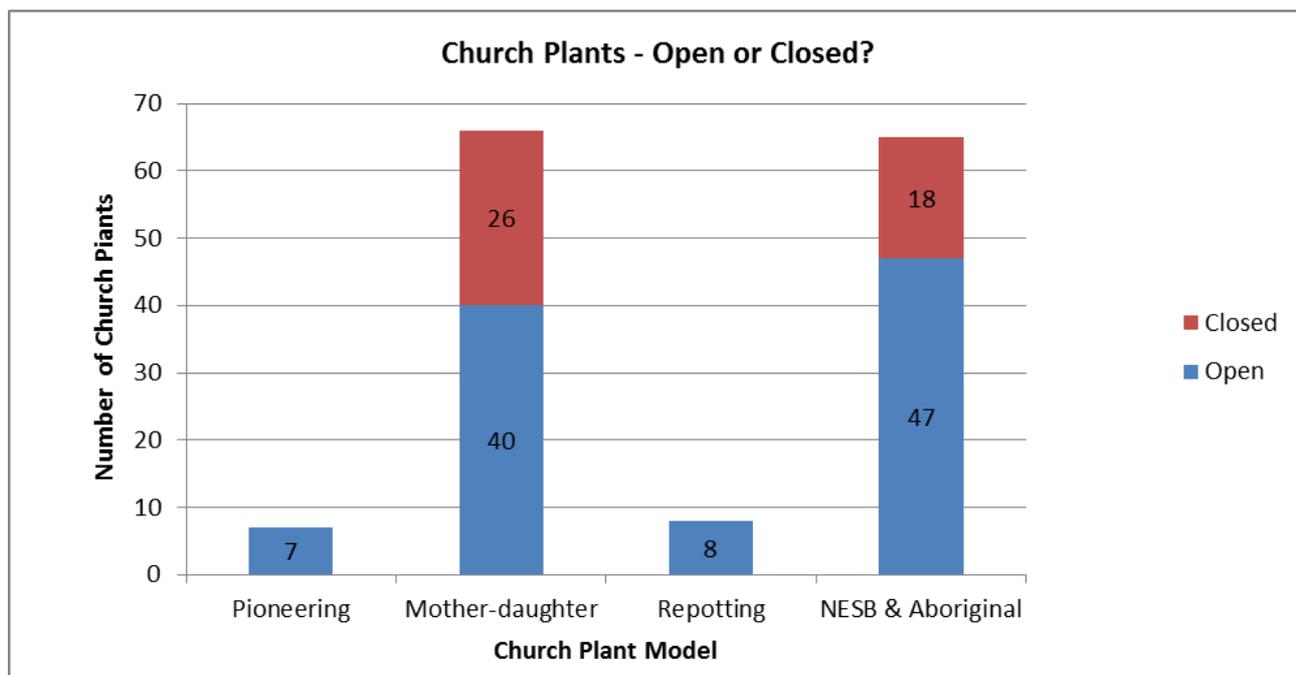
The first Research Questions asks, “Which church plants have gone well and which have folded?”

Of the church plants established in the period 2002-14, all of the **Pioneering** or **Repotted** churches identified in the study are still open at the beginning of 2015 (see Figure 5). While this may point to the potential strength of these particular models, it is noted that relatively few of these models have been implemented in the Diocese since 2001, reflecting the special circumstances and requirements that need to be met in order to launch either a Pioneering or a Repotted church.

Figure 5 shows that less than two-thirds of **Mother-daughter** church plants (40 out of 66, or 61%) launched since 2001 are still open at the beginning of 2015. Similarly 47 out of 65 **NESB/Aboriginal congregations** are still operating, or 72% of those launched.

Among **New church services** commenced in the period 2002-2011, some 69% are still open. Further analysis revealed that this survival rate varies somewhat according to the time of the service, with only 56% of services with a starting time between 4.30pm and 5.30pm still operating.

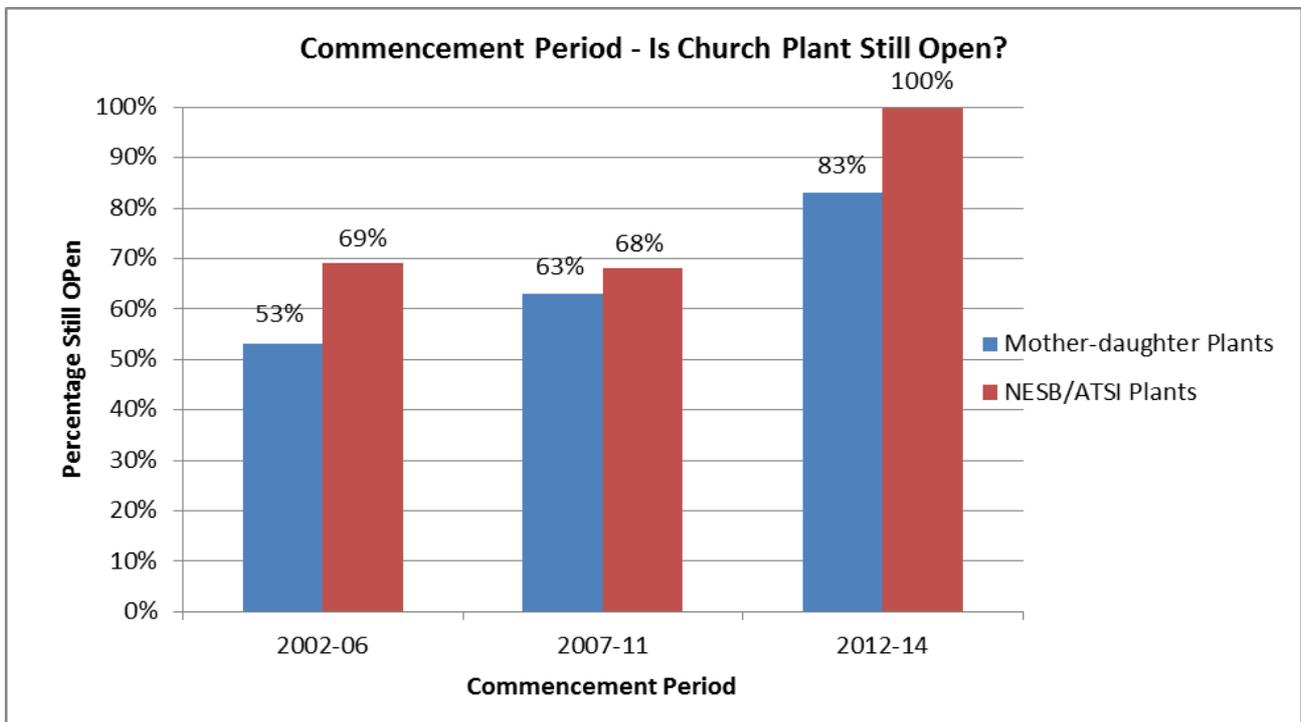
Figure 5



The folding of four out of every 10 Mother-daughter and three out of every 10 NESB/Aboriginal church plants is a substantial proportion. It could be asked whether church plants generally have a natural use-by date; in other words, are church plants increasingly likely to fold with age? Figure 6 shows that 53% of Mother-daughter church plants that commenced in 2002-06 are still operating compared with 63% of those that commenced in the 2007-11 period. Similarly about 70% of NESB/Aboriginal congregations that commenced in 2002-06 and in 2007-11 are still operating. This relative stability in the rate of survival of 2002-06 and 2007-11 commencements suggests that church planting failures are most likely to occur in the first few years of operation, followed by some erosion among surviving plants in the years that follow. Among church plants that have closed, the average length of survival among both Mother-daughter and NESB/Aboriginal church plants was about 4 years.

Although the context is different, it is worth noting that research in the USA found a similar pattern of attrition in the first few years of church plant establishment. Research conducted over 12 denominations and 1,000 churches revealed that by the fourth year of operation, just 68% of the original church plants had survived (Stetzer 2007a).

Figure 6



3.2 What Does Success Look Like?

The second research question asks: **“What are different models of church planting and how successful has each model been in the Diocese?”** To address this question requires definition of what ‘success’ looks like. Is success mainly about survival and achieving viability, as implied by the first research question? Or do church plants need to achieve other goals in order to be truly successful?

3.2.1 Missional Effectiveness

Interviewees in the study were asked in what ways their own church plant had been successful, or what they believed constitutes a successful church plant. Answers to these questions often referred to the impact of the church plant in terms of Christian conversion and extending the Kingdom of God [eg. Neyshaboury, Dale, Wood, O’Mara]. From the viewpoint of church planters, church planting is ultimately about spreading the Gospel and reaching unreached people. Conversions are to be sought, expected and celebrated.

Missional success can include:

- Attenders learning to trust God in the church planting process [Neyshaboury]
- Being a consistent and positive voice for Jesus in the local area [Wood]
- People being converted and integrated into the congregation [Hall]
- Jesus becoming central in the lives of attenders and attenders taking the Word of God seriously [Neyshaboury]
- Attenders growing into mature discipleship [Neal]
- Attenders becoming evangelists and making disciples [Dale]
- The church plant is healthy and reproducing [Hall].

3.2.2 Christian Community and Practical Assistance

Interviewees often considered that the development of Christian community and its practical expression to be part of church planting success. At Sadleir's Friendship service, Rev. David O'Mara wants conversion to occur, but also wants people to function well, live dignified lives, have less crises or destructive behaviour, have greater stability in their lives and feel safe at church [O'Mara]. At Living Water Community Fellowship in Redfern, success is found in conversion and spiritual growth but also in providing a safe place, friendship, people finding employment and overcoming substance addiction [Paterson]. At Killara's Chinese congregation there is a focus on discipleship training and reaching out to both short-stay visa holders and permanent residents. Offering friendship is a key part of the congregation's approach as is providing a range of practical help (eg. helping migrants to access GPs, help with document certification, going to Centrelink, English teaching) [Heazlewood & Wu]. At Vine Church in Surry Hills success includes the numbers of attenders who are leading, serving and giving [Neal].

3.2.3 Growth in Attendance

Growth in attendance was nearly always part of the answer given to the question "In what ways has your church plant been successful?" Some interviewees had experienced large and rapid growth while for others, growth had been slow and hard won. Growth carries with it the possibility of people becoming Christians, as new arrivals are challenged by the Gospel. Growth in attendance is also wrapped up in the question of financial viability and sustainability into the long term.

3.2.4 Achievement of Financial Viability

Achievement of financial viability was another measure of success commonly mentioned in the interviews. Most church plants start out with one or two leaders and a small core team and may have no property assets. Therefore it is necessary for church plants to begin to grow in attendance in order to become more financially viable, through the giving of attenders towards the basic costs of the church plant. Key expenditures that need to be addressed include a minister's stipend, their housing costs and costs associated with the church building and office (eg. maintenance, rent).

3.3 Levels of Newcomers

An important indicator of missional effectiveness is the level of newcomers present in churches at any given time. 'Newcomers', as defined in the National Church Life Survey, are those church attenders who have begun attending in the last five years, either for the first time or as a returnee to church life after an absence of years. The size of the newcomer inflow is an indication of the congregation's connection with the wider community. In view of its utility as one measure of missional effectiveness, the newcomer measure has been incorporated into *Mission 2020*.

A previous report (Bellamy, Sterland and King, 2008) found that a limited sample of 14 new churches in the Diocese had 18% newcomers, as measured through the 2006 National Church Life Survey, compared with the then Diocesan average of 11%. More recently the National Church Life Survey found that 13% of attenders at new churches were newcomers, in a combined national sample using both 2006 and 2011 data (NCLS, private communications). What are the levels of newcomers found in church plants in the Diocese?

In the current study, four of the five models of church plant also had higher-than-average levels of newcomers, as measured through the 2011 NCLS (see Figure 7). Non-English Speaking Background congregations had the highest levels with 15% of attenders being newcomers to church life. In terms of off-site church planting models, Pioneering churches had 13%, Repotted churches had 11% and Mother-daughter churches had 10%. New church services averaged 9% newcomers. By comparison, the Diocesan average was 9%. It should be noted that four of the seven Pioneering church plants took part in 2011 NCLS, two of the remainder commencing since 2011. However anecdotal evidence from these churches is

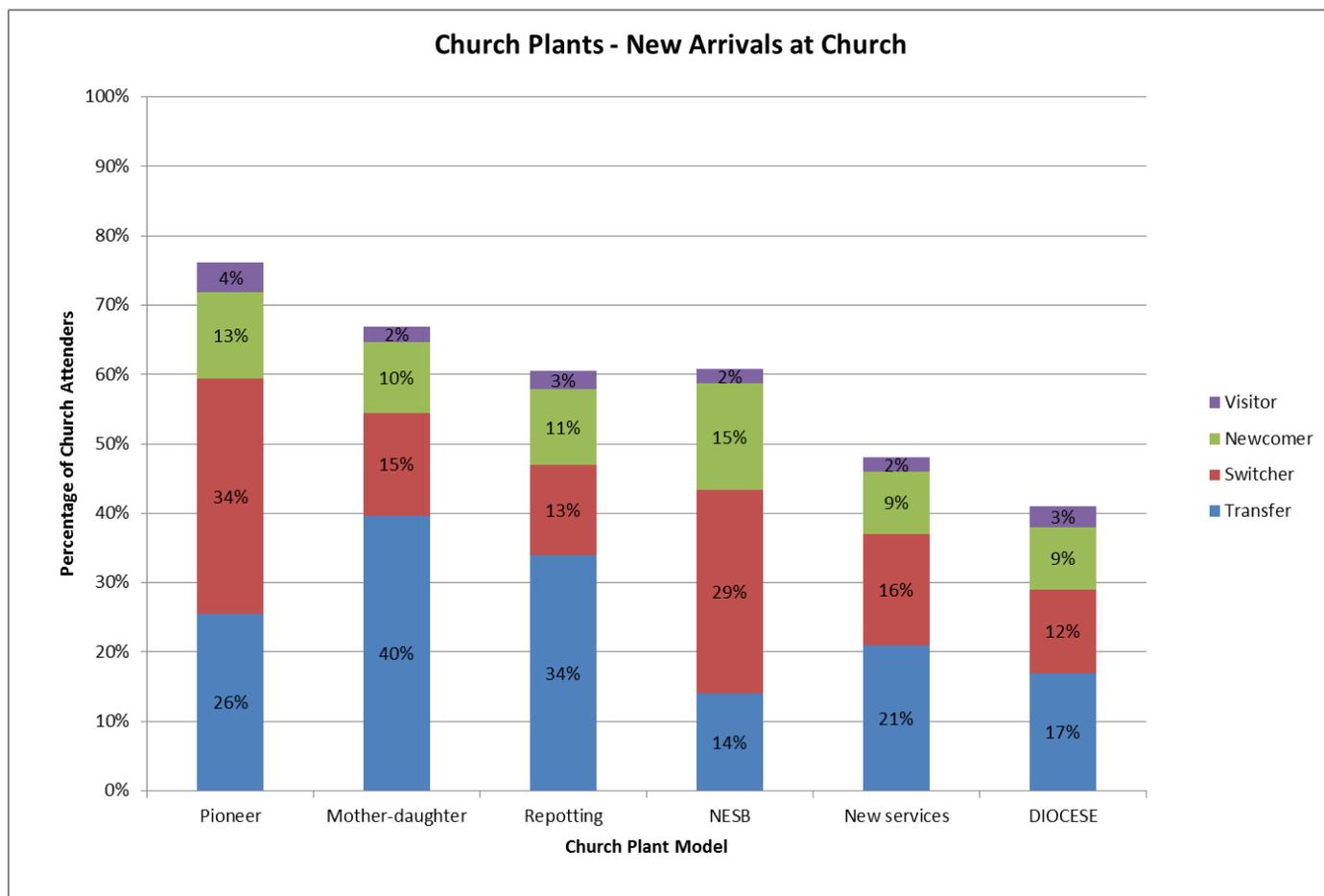
promising in terms of the presence of newcomers. It is possible that newcomer levels are higher among these Pioneering churches than is suggested in Figure 7.

Concern was expressed about the missional effectiveness of many church plants in connecting with people from the wider community and conversion [Powell]. There is some evidence to support this concern. Among the 32 Mother-daughter churches that took part in the 2011 NCLS, newcomer levels ranged from 0 to 28%, suggesting that connection and successful integration of people from the community varies greatly between these churches. By comparison the range of newcomers within the smaller Pioneering and Repotting categories is somewhat narrower.

3.3.1 First-time Newcomers

Newcomers to church life fall into two sub-categories: those attending a church for the first time and those returning to church life after an absence of years. The statistics shown in Figure 7 mask the fact that NESB church plants have particularly high levels of first-time attenders (9%) compared with Pioneering churches (4%), Repotted churches (4%), Mother-daughter churches (3%), New church services (3%) and the Diocese as a whole (4%). Given the very high proportions of attenders in these congregations who were born in a Non-English Speaking country (79%), it is likely that the higher levels of newcomers are related to the migrant experience, through the ability of these congregations to provide both a community and assistance for people seeking to transition into Australian society. Therefore it is important to recognise the contribution that NESB congregations can make to the Diocesan goal of reversing the downward trend in newcomers.

Figure 7



SOURCE: 2011 NCLS

3.3.2 Newcomer Growth vs Transfer Growth

All church planting models in the Diocese have above-average levels of new arrivals – transfers from other Anglican churches, denominational switchers, newcomers to church life and visitors (see Figure 7). At one level this is not surprising given the need to expand such congregations beyond the original founding team through the addition of new members. However it should also be remembered that a number of these congregations were founded in the five years prior to the 2011 NCLS; therefore it is more likely that attenders at such congregations will be classified into one of the ‘new arrival’ categories. Figure 7 shows that Mother-daughter and Repotted churches in the sample often have above-average levels of transfers, which is consistent with the way that these churches are founded. By contrast NESB and Pioneering churches expand more through joining by denominational switchers. Consistent with these statistics, some interviewees mentioned that some of their church’s growth had come through joining by ‘disaffected Pentecostals’.

An issue that was raised in the interviews concerned church plants growing by transfer. Transfer growth is often seen as inferior to newcomer growth, since it implies that the church may be ‘sheep-stealing’ from other churches rather than engaging in effective outreach to the wider community. There was a variety of opinion about this among interviewees. While interviewees agreed that the growth of church plants should be missional growth, some interviewees argued that this can quite legitimately include some ‘good’ transfer growth. Apart from the members of the church planting team, ‘good’ transfer growth can include regular church attenders who have moved into the local area [Katay], who have previously forsaken local churches to commute to an out-of-area church [Cocking], or who need to come to faith or deepen their faith commitment despite their previous church involvement [Jensen, Neal]. In relation to the first group, previous research has shown that moving house is a leading catalyst in people dropping out of church life altogether or becoming infrequent in attendance, through a failure to connect with a church in the new area (Bellamy *et al*, 2002, 102). Therefore it is important that destination churches seek to attract and welcome those new residents who may otherwise become disconnected from church life.

3.4 Growth in Attendance

Table 2 shows that, among churches still open in 2015, the three models of off-site churches had average attendances less than the 2011 Diocesan average (150). Mother-daughter church plants had the lowest average attendance (87). Analysis of the distribution of attendances showed that about half of Mother-daughter churches (48%) had weekly attendances of less than 70 people.

Table 2
Weekly Church Attendance*
Off-site Church Planting Models Compared




	Pioneering Churches	Mother-Daughter Churches	Repotted Churches	DIOCESE
Church Attendance				
 Average Weekly Attendance	101	87	113	150
 Percentage of churches with less than 70 attenders per week	43%	48%	25%	33%

* SOURCE: 2011 NCLS and estimates from parish/church plant staff. Attendance includes adults and children attending services in a typical week.

3.5 Financial Viability

The numbers of attenders needed to achieve viability varies depending upon the geographic location of the plant, the makeup of the congregation and its major outgoings. Churches that own church buildings, houses or investment property would be in a better situation financially than those that do not.

In this respect, interviewees involved in Pioneering church plants are most vulnerable, having no property assets and needing to gather together a variety of funding sources from beyond the church as well as within it, in order to be able to survive as a plant. High property prices, particularly in the inner city, are a strong deterrent towards owning property, leading to a long-term dependency upon rental property. Other interviewees mentioned that the demographic groups with which they are working are less able to give financially, so increasing the need to subsidise the costs of the church plant from other sources or for a longer period. These demographic groups include Aboriginal people, students, some migrants and refugees, people on low incomes, public housing residents and people with a mental illness [Paterson, O'Mara, Pickford].

Some daughter church plants too may not achieve full viability. Although they may have their own paid leader, such as an Assistant Minister of the parish, these churches may not have sufficient levels of giving to be financially viable in their own right. In this respect, such churches may be regarded as no different to each of the congregations meeting at the mother church. Viability then is maintained through the sum of the parts in the parish.

3.6 Mission 2020 Indicators

The Diocesan Mission, *Mission 2020*, adopted by Synod towards the end of 2014, sets out several targets for improvement in the quality of church life and key attendance measures. How have church plants in the Diocese been performing against the baseline measures adopted in *Mission 2020*?

The key source of measurement data used here is the 2011 National Church Life Survey. Most off-site church plants in the Diocese took part in this survey. Improvements to congregational coding in the lead-up to the survey have made it possible to extract the attender data for a large proportion of these off-site plants. The

service time question asked of all church attenders in the survey has also enabled attender data for NESB and New church services to be extracted. The approach to analysis taken here has been to aggregate all such attender data within the different categories of church plant, to enable profiles of each model of church planting to be developed.

The attender data of some 32 Mother-daughter church plants, all of the eight Repotted churches and four of the seven Pioneering church plants has been extracted from the 2011 NCLS (some Pioneering plants commenced after the survey). Attender responses from 25 NESB congregations have been extracted from the 2011 NCLS database; while the total number of NESB congregations that took part in the survey is somewhat higher than this, further records cannot be separated from other congregations in some parishes.

In view of the large size of the New church services category, a random sample of 30 new church services including some 1500 attenders has been drawn. The accuracy of the period of commencement of these new church services has been cross-checked against records obtained from the Diocesan Registry.

Table 3 below shows that in certain respects, church plants have better church vitality and attendance measures than the Diocesan average. However even where different church planting models are averaging higher than the baseline figures, they still generally fall short of *Mission 2020* targets for all indicators. This suggests that, like other churches in the Diocese, church plants too will need to consider how to increase their vitality across a range of indicators.

3.6.1 Church Vitality Indicators

Mission 2020 has identified a range of key church vitality indicators, including growth in faith, devotional activity, sharing faith with others, inviting to church, and encouragement to use their gifts and skills in church life. To this has been added the commitment of church attenders to the vision and directions of their congregation, which may also reflect attenders' commitment to the broader Diocesan Mission.

Levels of **growth in faith** were variable and levels of **devotional activity** were generally lower across the five models of church plants, compared with the Diocesan average. Regarding the use of gifts and skills, a comment made by some interviewees was that an advantage of church planting is the greater numbers of lay people who have roles and can be engaged in the running of the church. Table 3 shows that attenders at church plants were more likely to say that their **gifts and skills** are being used 'to a great extent'.

Levels of **sharing the faith** and **inviting to church** were generally higher in church plants than the Diocesan average. Average inviting levels were highest in NESB congregations. **Commitment to the vision of the congregation** was much higher than the Diocesan average in Pioneering, Mother-daughter and Repotted church plants suggesting that vision is an important driver in off-site church plants.

3.6.2 Attender Characteristics

As mentioned previously, levels of **newcomers** were higher than the Diocesan average across four of the five models of church plant. Table 3 shows that people born in **non-English speaking countries** were under-represented in Pioneering and Mother-daughter congregations. **Young adults (15-29 year olds)** tended to be under-represented among Mother-daughter and Repotted congregations but over-represented among Pioneering churches, NESB congregations and New church services.

Table 3
Church Planting Models Compared
Percentage of Attenders

		Pioneering Churches	Mother-Daughter Churches	Repotted Churches	Non-English Speaking Background Congregations	New Church Services	DIOCESE
	Church Vitality						
	Much growth in faith	43%	44%	50%	50%	50%	47%
	Private devotions – every day/most days	34%	38%	39%	38%	41%	43%
	Use of gifts and skills to a great extent	24%	23%	26%	21%	25%	21%
	Look for opportunities to share faith with others	21%	19%	19%	21%	19%	18%
	Invited someone to church in the past year	42%	42%	40%	50%	45%	40%
	Fully committed to the vision/directions of the congregation	47%	51%	50%	29%	43%	41%
	Attender Characteristics						
	Newcomers	13%	10%	11%	15%	9%	9%
	Born in a Non-English Speaking country	7%	12%	16%	79%	15%	16%
	15-29 year olds	34%	18%	19%	31%	34%	22%

SOURCE: 2011 NCLS

4. Factors that Contribute to Success or Failure of Church Plants

As the previous section has shown, about a third of churches planted in 2002-11 in the three largest categories – New church services, Mother-daughter church plants and NESB/Aboriginal congregations – were no longer operating at the end of 2014. By contrast other church plants thrive and some go on to start other congregations. In view of the resources that are being committed to church planting and the continued inclusion of church planting as a central strategy in *Mission 2020*, it is important to identify what can be done to improve both the survival and effectiveness of church plants.

The third research question in the study asked: **What are the factors that contribute to a successful church plant and what contributes to a church plant folding?** The identification and discussion of these factors is the subject of this section of the report.

This section of the report relies mainly upon the interviews carried out with leaders connected with church planting in the Sydney Diocese; mostly people who have been ‘hands on’ in establishing church plants. The style of analysis of this information is different to statistical analysis. The analysis here involved looking for common themes or key thoughts, as interviewees recounted the stories of their church plants or responded more directly to questions. However it has also been about impressions formed about the interviewee – what appeared to be important to them and what they did ‘on the job’.

This section of the report also refers to the findings of other research on this issue. Most of this research originates from North America, there being a scarcity of equivalent research in Australia. In common with the broader church growth literature, church planting research usually seeks to identify discrete characteristics or factors that appear to contribute to the success or failure of a church plant. These key factors are expressed as being causes or necessary pre-conditions for the success of church plants.

4.1 Church Planter – Intrinsic Qualities

Intrinsic qualities are what a church planter brings to the task. These qualities are seen to be part of the character or nature of the leader but are also reflected in what the leader does ‘on the job’. An implication of this is that the Diocese should do what it can to attract, promote or remove roadblocks for candidates who have these qualities.

All interviewees agreed that the church planter is crucial to the success of church planting. Particular skills for the task – spiritual gifts, ability to motivate and equip others, evangelism and discipling skills – are mentioned in the literature (Ott & Wilson 2011, Thompson, 2007). The following list captures those characteristics of the church planter that emerged as most important factors in the interviews.

4.1.1 Being an Evangelist

The church planter needs to look for ways to share the Gospel with others and win them to Christ. Being an evangelist is a ‘must have’ quality to be an effective church planter [Dale]. It could be considered *the* most important quality or the only really important quality to be an effective church planter [Jensen]. Finances, buildings and other resources are considered to be secondary compared to the people who are going to do the work of sharing the faith [Hall].

The leader has a passion to see people from around the world coming to faith in Christ [Hall, Cocking]. While being an evangelist is more about having a conviction than a competency, people wishing to be church planters need to have demonstrated ability in this area [Jensen].

Being an evangelist means that:

- The Gospel and sharing it with others is at the forefront of the leader's mind
- The leader has a passion for the Lost and reaching them in whatever way possible
- The leader has skills in sharing the Gospel, such as in preaching
- The leader will not be satisfied with anything less than people coming to know Jesus on a regular basis
- The leader will model this priority to the congregation, enabling it to drive congregational direction and activity
- Presenting the Gospel at church is a frequent not a special event
- The leader will recruit people into what he is doing and seek to empower others to share the Gospel.

Being an evangelist often emerged as a theme in the interviews. Some interviews were peppered with references to sharing the Gospel with others and it was clear that this is a foundational, driving motivation found among church planters.

4.1.2 Being an Innovator

A key factor in the literature is having a founding minister who is an innovator, with skills in establishing new things (Hadaway & Marler 2001; Dadswell & Ross 2013, 47). Such leaders are initiators, not maintainers. Successful planters are energetic and proactive at starting new works (Malphurs 2004, 22). One researcher called this the 'catalytic innovator' personality type; a self-starter, risk taker, charismatic leader, tenacious perseverer and flexible adaptor (Wood 2006, 30-62). Such a leader exercises faith and courage in the face of risk and uncertainty. The leader is not afraid to fail, being able to learn from mistakes (Malphurs 2004, 25, 75-81).

Similar ideas were expressed in different ways in the interviews. The leader needs to be someone who:

- Regularly starts new things and can bring about worthwhile change [Jensen]
- Is 'evangelistically entrepreneurial' [Jensen]
- Is energetic [Neal]
- Is flexible and can live with uncertainty and ambiguity [Hall, Paterson]
- Can 'scrounge' for people, resources and finances [Katay, Neyshaboury]
- Can 'think outside the square' about issues such as fundraising [Pickford]
- Is quick to recognise and seize opportunities [Jensen, Dale]
- Knows what to keep and what to change [Crawshaw].

The observation was made that the leaders of Pioneering church plants need to be innovative or entrepreneurial even more than with the other models, since Pioneering plants start with no funding or assets [Hall, Crawshaw]. Under the current situation in the Diocese, pioneering planters are required to put together a support base in order to sustain the church plant, with little or no financial backing from either the Diocese or parishes.

4.1.3 Being a Relational Leader

Church planting is both hard work and stressful, and is best achieved in partnership with others. Church planters need an ability to bring people with them; to be able to gather people around them in order to drive the establishment of the church plant. A necessary skill is in being able to assemble a core team, convincing and motivating individuals to be part of the team [Katay, Neal]. There was no evidence that this could be achieved successfully through a dictatorial approach. Interviewees talked about leaders needing to be winsome; a 'people person'; a good communicator at an interpersonal level as well as up-the-front; inspiring and empowering others; working by trusting others rather than by micro-management; able to resolve conflict; working in partnership with others in the core team, the congregation and beyond [Cocking,

Dale, Kellahan, Neal, Crawshaw]. In Non-English Speaking Background congregations, the need for such relational leadership can be an essential cultural requirement [Neyshaboury] and with Aboriginal people it is important to be empathetic and non-judgemental [Paterson].

4.1.4 Ethnicity of the Leader –A Key Factor for NESB Congregations

A key factor in non-English speaking background congregations is the ethnic background of the leader. Often these congregations are organised along mono-ethnic lines, designed to be attractive and comfortable for a single or narrow range of ethnic groups. Therefore it is usual that the congregational leader shares the same ethnic background as the congregation since the leader will need to be fluent in the predominant spoken language of the congregation.

4.2 Church Planter – On the Job

Apart from the intrinsic qualities that the church planter brings to the role, there are things that the church planter needs to do in approaching the role and ‘on the job’ that can increase effectiveness. These aspects are discussed in this section.

4.2.1 Use of Assessment and Selection Processes

US research points to the need for the prospective church planter to be assessed for their suitability for the task (Stetzer & Connor 2007; Hadaway & Marler 2001; Malphurs 2004, 83-104; Shepherd 2003). It has been claimed that failure rates among church plants in the US have dropped significantly following the widespread implementation of church planter assessment, training and coaching (Stetzer 2007b). So this is an issue that is worthy of consideration.

Whilst it is not a mandatory requirement in the Diocese, the tide appears to be moving in the direction of prospective church planters being assessed for the role. The Geneva Push organisation provides a variety of resources for church planters, including access to assessment. Evangelism and New Churches (ENC) encourages assessment to be undertaken as part of assisting church planters, along with ongoing coaching and mentoring. Assessment through Geneva Push not only involves determining suitability for the role but also can include understanding the context for mission, a mission plan and a financial plan.

There was a wide range of opinion among interviewees regarding the value of assessment. Many interviewees regarded assessment as essential or beneficial for church planting. If done well, assessment can shape subsequent training and coaching, since it can identify a candidate’s strengths and weaknesses [Katay]. Being able to receive advice from others about suitability for the role is better than self-assessment alone [Hall]. Favourable assessment by others can provide confirmation that the candidate is on the right track in pursuing church planting [Paterson, Neal]. All church planters may benefit from assessment irrespective of the church planting model; while it can be argued that the leaders of Pioneering church plants need stronger leadership abilities than the leaders of Mother-daughter church plants, both can benefit from assessment [Hall].

However other interviewees regarded assessment as unnecessary or irrelevant. It should be noted that many interviewees had themselves never been formally assessed. Assessment was seen as a way of weeding out people who should *not* be doing church planting, rather than necessarily identifying those who should be doing it [Neal]. Rev Phillip Jensen warned that at best assessment is neutral but at worst it could be damaging, since it:

- May rely upon psychological testing regimes and interviews which may not reveal the true capabilities of the candidate
- Is unnecessary, as the key indication of whether a person is suited to being a church planter is what they have already done in evangelism and in starting new ministries

- Is potentially discouraging to people who may be suited as planters, through the making of an incorrect assessment.

Highlighting this last point, two of the interviewees volunteered that they had failed formal assessments. In one case, the assessment that had been carried out was faulty, before he obtained a second, more appropriate assessment. Despite this experience, he still favoured formal assessment.

4.2.2 Being Full-time and Dedicated

It has been noted in the literature that a key factor is that the church planter be able to fully commit themselves to the task (Stetzer & Connor 2007; Malphurs 2004, 24). This was also affirmed in interviews for the study. Leaders who have too many responsibilities elsewhere that take them away from the church plant mean that the leader risks not being sufficiently available to the other members of the congregation and has an insufficient presence at the congregation; this can become problematic in maintaining the confidence and motivation of attenders. Furthermore as the church plant becomes larger and perhaps a parish in its own right, more time is needed for a host of other issues connected with running a large church, which can distract the church planter from the target audience and lead to the church becoming self-absorbed, losing its evangelistic edge [Jensen].

In Sydney Anglican churches, most congregations are less than 200 people in size; even large churches of up to 1000 attenders are usually comprised of a number of smaller congregations. Ministers are able to stay in touch with a smaller number of people but this is harder to achieve where the minister has responsibility for the running of more than one such congregation. In a smaller congregation the minister can lead the service, conduct the preaching and be part of social gatherings after the service; the minister should be the “first there and the last to leave”. Therefore it is important that leaders not be responsible for two congregations that are in the same part of the day in order to remain effective leaders [Katay].

4.2.3 Ongoing Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring involves acting as an advisor or guide to another person, providing personal reflections to them based upon a greater experience. *Coaching* involves showing someone how to carry out a role or tasks, perfecting technical aspects and improving performance. Mentoring and coaching are important ways that denominations can lend support to church plants (Malphurs 2004, 56; McCrary 2001; Rowley 2005). Mentoring and coaching were considered important by most interviewees in the current study and essential by some [Katay, Hall]. Rev Bruce Hall argued that since most Pioneering church planters (and many Mother-daughter church planters) are young leaders and that church planting is stressful, “mentoring will keep the bloke in the game and coaching will help him to do it well”. Rectors are able to provide mentoring for Assistant Ministers undertaking daughter church plants, but Pioneering and other planters need support from other sources. Currently both ENC and Geneva Push provide opportunities for mentoring and coaching; other leaders have developed mentoring relationships informally with people they have met in church life. There may be value in having mentors with differing expertise and background providing advice on different aspects of the church planting role [Neal].

4.2.4 Planning and Lead Times

Developmental phases prior to launching a church plant have been highlighted in the literature. These phases can include commissioning the leader and team, gathering support, developing the vision, understanding and strategising to reach the target group, and equipping and strengthening the team (Ott & Wilson 2011, 155-207). Interviewees often agreed that longer lead times can be beneficial for planning the church plant. Lead times of 12 months or more enable the church planter to gather support, to convince people to join the core team, to obtain a venue and to develop the model of church plant [Hall].

However in practice some of the church plants covered by the study started with short lead times. This highlighted a tension for leaders between the need to plan well and the need to seize the opportunity as it is presented. The Wild Street repotting exemplified that tension; the leader and core team were only able to meet a few times before having to commit to the church plant, make basic arrangements and find a building – all within a 6 month window of opportunity. Much of the detailed planning occurred after they had started the plant. Despite the tight timeframe, it did not cost them in any way [Cocking].

Interviewees recognised that an opportunity can be lost if action is not taken. A reliance on God's sovereignty is needed where so many factors are beyond the control of the church planter; trial and error is preferred to over-planning [Lim]. In this respect there is greater flexibility in starting new church services than in starting a new church. When presented with a good opportunity to start a new service, Rev Paul Dale jumped at the chance: "If you've got a venue and a preacher, just do it!" The new service commenced within 6 weeks.

4.2.5 Clarity of Communication

Clarity of communication with the congregation is a key to successful church planting. This becomes very important in multi-congregational situations where there may be competing interests for the same resources and to keep congregations informed about each other's needs [Kellahan]. In order to avoid congregations developing a silo mentality, the senior leader needs to work on ensuring that the congregations will work together in partnership [Dale].

4.2.6 Perseverance and God's Sovereignty

According to Malphurs, successful planters have a commitment to quality, and back this with sufficient planning, focus, and tenacity to execute. It is equally critical that they possess the ability to temper this with sufficient humility to accept failure, pick up and press on (Malphurs 2004, 74-77).

One of the main impressions formed about interviewees for the current study was not only their clarity of thinking around the task but also their willingness to persevere in pursuing the goal. There is a need to 'hang in there' long enough to see progress and to keep encouraging the core team and congregation [Katay, Crawshaw]. It can take years to see even modest growth in attendance. As Peter and Elizabeth Wood reflected, at times church planting feels like "driving an old Holden" – bits keep falling off as you're driving along but you keep going. Interviewees reflected upon hard times and the need to persevere in the light of God's sovereignty over all things. There is the need to pray earnestly and wait on God, to step out in faith and see where He guides you [Neysaboury].

4.3 The Church Planting Team

The core team is a key factor in the success of church plants. A stable core, at least in the early years is important. Team unity, a common purpose, an accepted leader, satisfactory relationships, functional division of labour and agreement on how to work together are all important issues to be resolved (Ott & Wilson 2011, 347). Church planters should have an eye to the next generation, equipping members for roles, and recruiting and training the next generation of church planters (Hadaway & Marler 2001; Ott & Wilson 2011; Hesselgrave 2000, 146-149; Dadswell & Ross 2013, 28, 51-52).

Interviews carried out for the current study reflected similar ideas. The core team needs to include evangelistically committed lay people who also want to see the church plant fulfil its missional purpose and who will create ways to reach out [Cocking, Hall, Heazlewood & Wu]. The core team needs to have the same 'DNA' as the leader in theology and passion for the Lost and must not be motivated by wanting to get away from an unsatisfactory church situation [Hall]. The core team should comprise people with similar demographics to the target group [Neal]. There needs to be trust and flexibility in the team, with a willingness to work with 'trial and error' [Crawshaw]. It is an advantage to have people in the team with gifts

and skills that can be used to help raise the church's profile in the community, as profile raising is important in the early days of a plant [Cocking]. Gifts and skills that are really useful among the core team are people who can handle finances, manage the building, help lead meetings, do kids ministry and assist in evangelism. It is important that everyone on the team is contributing to the running of the church in some way [Crawshaw]. "You need people who will do the ministry with you" [Hall]. Musical skills are important [O'Mara, Katay, Dale, Neal] as is a warm, friendly service leader [Neal].

4.3.1 What is a Minimum-sized Core Team?

Research among church plants in the Southern Baptist Convention found that the fastest growing plants had larger core teams (Stetzer 2007a). Other US research found that teams with fewer than 50 members were three times as likely to fail (Malphurs 2004, 209). The general consensus in the literature is 'the bigger the better' when it comes to the size of the planting team (Malphurs 2004, 209; Stetzer 2006, 119).

There was also general agreement among interviewees for the current study that the bigger the team the better and that it is harder to plant a church successfully with a small team. The smaller the team, the more that people are on rosters, while in a larger team the workload can be shared around [Lim]. The smaller the team, the greater the rate of growth in attendance needed to reach a viable size [Hall, Cocking, Neal].

In terms of an optimum number some suggested that 30 is a good number for a launch team [Lim, Crawshaw]. Meetings will not feel too empty when visitors arrive. Others recommended even higher numbers such as 40 or 50 for the launch team in order for the church to reach viability in a shorter time period [Cocking, Hall, Neal]. A larger number enables the provision of children's ministry, a greater diversity of gifts in the congregation such as pastoral, musical and graphics skills, and more 'bodies on the ground' [Cocking].

Yet in practice most interviewees started church plants with smaller launch teams than this. Beginning with 10 or 20 attenders under a single leader appeared to be common. Core teams among interviewees ranged from 5 to 60 people.

4.4 Vision and Direction

Having a clear shared vision and direction often crops up as an important factor in the literature, including values, ministry distinctives, and missional emphases (Hadaway & Marler 2001; Winseman 2007; Malphurs 2004, 128-148; Keller 2012; Dadswell & Ross 2013, 27).

Interviewees agreed that the church plant needs to have a clear missional purpose. It is important that the leader clearly articulates the preferred location for the church plant, the purpose of the plant and who the team might be able to successfully reach with the Gospel [Hall]. The core team should also become carriers of the vision [Crawshaw]. For some interviewees a clear vision meant a formal mission statement (eg. "Disciples making disciples through the Word of God and prayer" [Cocking] and "Jesus Christ transforming lives to transform the community" [Pickford]). Others balked at the word 'vision' preferring instead to talk of the importance of the church planter providing clarity of purpose and holding strong personal convictions about mission [Kellahan].

4.5 Location of the Church Plant

The location of the church plant came up in the literature as being of importance to the potential success of church plants. Meeting sites with high visibility and locating the plant in areas of high population growth were seen to be advantages for the plant (Hadaway & Marler 2001; Malphurs 2004, 217).

4.5.1 Local Community Characteristics

The characteristics of the local community were seen as being of some influence on the success of church planting. Some interviewees were aware that at least some of the success of their church planting was due to a favourable demographic tide in their suburb, while others were aware that the characteristics of the local community made church planting more difficult. For instance, it was noted that there had been an influx of young professionals and families into suburbs on the lower North Shore which had created more favourable conditions in which to establish church plants [Lim]. However local demographic characteristics were seen as less crucial to success than the qualities of the church planter and the core team [Hall].

In planting an NESB congregation in an area, there is a need to consider education levels and socio-economic characteristics as well; migrants in higher socio-economic areas are more likely to be aspirational, better educated and competent English speakers compared with lower socio-economic areas. Very different church plants may be required, depending upon these demographic factors [Hall].

4.5.2 Building Type

Schools, existing church buildings, community centres, shopping mall storefronts and movie theatres are seen as good options for the location of church plants in the literature. Art studios, restaurants and coffee shops could also be considered (Malphurs 2004, 222-224; Stetzer 2006, 247-352). The building chosen needs to be suited to the needs of the target group; for instance young families will need crèche areas and Sunday School programs and study groups will need smaller rooms (Malphurs 2004, 178; Stetzer 2006, 347; Dadswell & Ross 2013, 14-17).

Although interviewees for the current study generally thought of the building as of secondary importance to the success of a church plant, it was considered that the building should be comfortable providing good opportunities for social gathering as well as worship [Crawshaw, Katay].

Interviewees generally did not see a *church* building as a hindrance to connecting with the wider community. Some were of the view that a church building provided a better profile for the congregation. Unlike a school where the congregation is only present for a short time each week, a church building is a constant community presence, often used for meetings throughout the week as well as on Sundays. This feature is especially important for churches located in 'village-like' shopping centres with lots of passing pedestrian traffic [Dale]. One interviewee thought that community attitudes had changed to the point where local people had begun to once again value the local church building as a carrier of family and community history [Kellahan]. Older church buildings, however, often require refurbishment to bring them up to acceptable standards for meetings and to maximise comfort [Katay].

4.5.3 Schools

Schools are a special case, being the most common facility for Mother-daughter church plants. Sometimes church plants are set up with the expressed aim of reaching out to the broader school community. For other church plants, the school is simply seen as a base, being affordable premises with most of the facilities needed by a church plant (eg: a large hall, classrooms, kitchen facilities).

The leaders of church plants that sought to reach out to the school community described the many ways in which they sought to become part of the school community including:

- Providing Scripture classes and leading special school assemblies
- Joining or chairing the P&C
- Organising events such as BBQs for parents
- Providing holiday programs or after-school care for students
- Providing chaplaincy services for the school.

However despite high levels of activity and service, many described a lack of ‘traction’ at schools, with few if any families becoming part of congregational life [Hall, Cocking]. Being located at a school may also lose its *raison d’être* once the last of the congregation’s children have left the school. Parents attending the church may also leave the church once their children have left the school. It should also be recognised that the time involved in running a church or parish can greatly limit any potential participation in school life [O’Mara].

4.6 Contextually Appropriate Meetings and Outreach

A theme that emerged throughout the interviews was that of being culturally appropriate for the context within which the church plant was established. This principle applies both to the internal life of the church – meeting style, preaching and worship – and to the external interface with the wider community or networks – communications, outreach, evangelism and community service. Malphurs (2004, 72-74) puts it well in saying that successful church planters are deeply rooted in the conviction that the gospel is unchanging, but that the form in which it is expressed must be well contextualised.

4.6.1 Understanding the Target Group

Interviewees often gave the impression of being deeply invested in better understanding the people that they are trying to reach. Some writers say that church planters must be constantly engaged in ‘cultural exegesis’, leading to re-evaluation of the forms of their mission and ministry. Remaining in-touch with surrounding culture involves building relationships, reading, interrogating demographic data, and conducting community surveys (Malphurs 2004, 341-365; Keller 2012).

Several interviewees referred to the use of local Census data, community survey techniques and gathering statistics about the community in planning for ministry [eg. Neyshaboury, Pickford]. For instance *Church by the Bridge* at Milsons Point now has six services, which were generally established through a process involving research about the community, consultation with attenders and congregations about resourcing requirements, and development of a clear understanding of the target group for the new service. Consequently each service has its own distinctive style and flavour, designed for the target audience and the locality [Dale].

By extension, the nature and number of church plants undertaken by a parish may reflect not only a desire to reach the local area but also different demographic groups within the area. The common model of early morning (traditional), late morning (family) and evening (youth) services often results in substantial variations in service style to accommodate cultural differences between demographic groups. Similarly the multiplication of church services along ethnic and generational lines can give a church greater ‘surface area’ for connecting with local communities, providing more opportunities for outreach and evangelism [Lim].

4.6.2 Homogeneous Unit Principle or Heterogeneity?

A homogeneous approach involves the formation of separate congregations aimed at specific target groups while a heterogeneous approach seeks to embrace a wide range of groups within the one congregation. There were varying points of view about these approaches. Some interviewees were of the view that while heterogeneity is the heavenly reality, on Earth homogeneity is a limitation that must be worked with. Culture and language can be hurdles to overcome and sin further constrains people from overcoming these hurdles [Jensen, Hall]. While not criticising the heterogeneous approach, it was acknowledged that people like to meet with people who are like themselves. Non-English Speaking Background congregations are usually expressions of the homogeneous approach, but the same principle extends to student congregations, family services, and traditional services.

Others had a different viewpoint. *Soul Revival* at Kirrawee is based on the proposition of different generations meeting in the one gathering to benefit each other through conversation. The church strives to be ‘all age/all stage’ and intercultural. It is intended that older people benefit from the cultural awareness of

the young and that younger people benefit from the spiritual wisdom and experience of the old. All benefit from the different cultural expressions that can occur in the meetings [Crawshaw].

Some interviewees had adopted a hybrid approach. Paul Dale spoke of services that targeted specific demographic groups but also sought to maintain demographic diversity when splitting a congregation into two. Nima Neyshaboury noted the benefits of different ethnicities mixing together in an International congregation but also the benefits of congregations formed along ethnic lines for teaching and cultural purposes.

4.6.3 Church Services, Groups and Gatherings

The literature speaks of the importance of culturally relevant worship, creative and 'done well' (Malphurs 2004, 367-386). More often than not, this means adopting a contemporary style (Stetzer 2007a). Worship needs to be God-centred and easily comprehensible to seekers (Stetzer 2006, 376-388). Preaching needs to be interesting, to touch felt needs, balance the practical and the theological, be simple and memorable, not too long, employ clear simple language, and be creative and positive (Malphurs 2004, 386-392; Stetzer 2006, 389-403). Importantly services should be enjoyable, giving attenders the confidence to invite people to church, knowing what they can expect from the service [Neal].

Providing contextually appropriate church services and meetings was seen by interviewees as a very important factor in the success of church plants. The following range of examples shows just how differently churches may need to act in different contexts:

- People who have had no experience of church when growing up are best included in meetings that have contemporary music, use overhead projection or service sheets and which have a modern tone [Katay]
- In town centres, the timing of services can coincide with high levels of pedestrian activity, increasing the likelihood of 'walk-in' visits [Dale]
- Service starting times prior to meal times (eg. 11am, 5pm) create the opportunity for meals together and the extending of hospitality to visitors [Neyshaboury, Dale]
- Church services around tables, with butchers paper and pens, a 'smoko' break, cup of tea and a meal, are more appealing to attenders living in public housing areas [Pickford]
- Services and meetings in low socio-economic and NESB areas need to be carried out in simple English [Wood, O'Mara]
- For Aboriginal people the provision of transport to the meeting, flexible start and finish times, respect for elders and meals together all assist in increasing participation [Paterson].

Non-English Speaking Background services need to be geared to the cultural requirements of the target ethnic grouping. For example, informality and meeting together around a table is more appropriate to Iranian culture, reflecting the meeting together on equal terms [Neyshaboury].

The importance of eating together and food were a common theme across the interviews. Meals together after church were important events, whether at restaurants, clubs or on the church premises. NESB services held in the morning would often be followed by lunch. Church services held at 5pm would be followed by dinner. Some churches have commercial kitchen facilities and dedicated eating areas on the premises (eg. *Soul Revival* at Kirrawee). People from outside church life are able to meet others, make friends and avoid loneliness in the context of a Christian gathering over a meal [Neal]. The provision of food and meals has special significance to people living with disadvantage [O'Mara, Pickford].

4.6.4 Outreach Activity

Outreach activity was generally viewed as important by the interviewees to the success of the church plant. For some interviewees this meant that outreach should be a continuous activity, with a succession of new

initiatives to “keep the ripples going” [Cocking]. Evangelistic preaching should be frequent, not a special event [Neal]. *Christianity Explained* and other evangelistic Bible studies appeared to be useful tools in different contexts.

It was recognised that evangelism is more difficult among some groups or locations than others, and inviting to church may be more difficult. People now are more suspicious of Christians, no longer seeing them as irrelevant but as ‘dangerous’ for their views. Therefore it is important that these assumptions be challenged by well-trained Christians, thereby allowing inviting to church to happen [Kellahan].

Similar to church meetings, outreach activities should seek to be culturally appropriate:

- There should be multiple avenues into church life, in view of the diversity of the wider community [Hall]
- Attenders should feel confident inviting people to their church and expect that it will not immediately alienate those they have invited [Neal]
- People living with disadvantage are best reached through outreach that provides practical help and a listening ear. [Pickford, Dale]. This can require strong boundaries (“we’re not going to pay all your bills”), patience in being accepted by the community and by demonstrating a long term commitment to them [Pickford]
- Christmas is an important moment when people come to church. However rather than closing down over January, this can be an important opportunity for the church plant to run events that will encourage such visitors to come back again and to attract new residents from the local community [Cocking].

4.7 Being Part of the Community

The issue of connectedness with the target group or local community came up frequently in the interviews. In the UK, many successful church plants express this as an ‘incarnational’ approach to mission – becoming involved in the local context in a systematic way (Dadswell & Ross 2013, 29).

4.7.1 Awareness or Profile Raising

An important factor early in the life of the church plant is awareness-raising in the broader community. Awareness-raising can include new signage, letterbox drops, stalls at the local railway station, survey door-knocking and public seminars (eg. about life issues, cooking, time-management) [Katay]. It can include improved Google Search Engine Optimisation and development of an attractive and functional website [Neal, Crawshaw]. Such awareness-raising can increase the number of ‘walk-in’ visitors to the church as distinct from people invited to church. There were many good examples, both large and small, of awareness-raising in the interviews, including the following examples:

- Soon after the Wild Street repotting took place, the core team of about 30 people spent the next year planning a community event. Called *Wildfest*, the event took place in the park opposite the church, and included seminars, food stalls and kids activities. Around 2,500 people attended from the community, which had the impact of putting the small church ‘on the map’. Even up to five years after the event people would visit the church prompted by the brochures handed out at this one-off event [Cocking]
- At Church by the Bridge, attenders are asked to become involved in one activity of the community external to the church (eg. gym, clubs, cooking classes). This involvement means that when marketing campaigns are undertaken by the church, there is already some awareness of the church through these personal contacts, as well as a large pool of potential invitees. The leader seeks to engender a confidence in people that ‘every service is a great service to which to invite people’ [Dale]

- At Ropes Crossing church, door-knocking and leaflet drops did not immediately result in anyone coming to church. But conversations on the doorstep led to conversations at the shopping centre and elsewhere. Being seen around the community slowly raised awareness of the church among local people [Wood].

4.7.2 Participating in Community Events and Practical Service

Becoming part of the community can involve participation in community-run events such as Clean Up Australia Day and Anglicare's Toys 'N Tucker. With the resources of the congregation, participation can include coordination of the event locally, recruitment of people from the community to assist and the churches' facilities becoming part of the infrastructure for the event. At that point, the church has become a community hub [Dale].

Practical service to the community can be a key part of connecting with that community. (Ott & Wilson, 2011, 399-407). Being a community youth worker means that Matt Paterson has a constant presence in his local community and has a practical role in helping Aboriginal young people [Paterson]. Using the 'Adopt-a-Block' approach Wayne Pickford found that by visiting the same streets in a low socio-economic area and offering practical support, enabled both himself and his team to become known to residents. They offered prayer and help to sick people, a listening ear to lonely people and gave away food to those who needed it. After a long time, people eventually asked about church and about God [Pickford]. Sadleir Anglican holds a regular community BBQ which enables people from the wider community to come into contact with Anglicare counselling for family issues, or to then come to Sadleir's Friendship service. The Friendship service provides a short worship time, a place of safety and for socialising, and meals [O'Mara].

4.7.3 Network or Regionally-Focussed Congregations

While local connections are important for most congregations, the target group may be quite dispersed. An example of a dispersed network is University students who often have a transient existence, moving residence each year within a larger region [Jensen]. Inviting friends then becomes a main pathway into the congregation. Attenders are used to travelling to the congregation and may not find it a problem inviting friends to come with them. This occurs commonly in relation to Non-English Speaking Background congregations. The problem can then become a lack of local connections because attenders live outside the local area [Heazlewood & Wu]. Others have found that while church attenders are willing to travel long distances to reach their church, non-attenders are unwilling to do so, making it hard for attenders to invite people to church. In that situation, the solution may be to establish another church plant elsewhere, to reduce the travel quantum for attenders and visitors alike [Lim].

4.8 Welcoming and Follow-up Processes

Research suggests that successful church plants have welcoming and integration processes for new arrivals at church (eg. welcoming teams, visitor packs, lunches for new arrivals) and can systematically track visiting and attendance (Hadaway & Marler, 2001; Dadswell & Ross 2013,32). Several interviewees in the current study mentioned the importance of having systems in place for recording visitor details and monitoring individual attendance to trigger timely follow-up [Katay, Neal, Crawshaw, Hall]. With the widespread use of computers and mobile phone technology, such systems are increasingly electronically-based, supported by specialised software (eg. Elvanto).

4.9 Partnerships and Support Networks

The role of partnerships was a consistent theme in the interviews, particularly in relation to off-site church plants. How these partnerships are handled can impact upon the success of a church plant.

Mother - daughter church plants usually involve a partnership from the outset, with the daughter church initially being dependent upon the mother church for resources and personnel. How such a partnership is handled can affect the success of the church plant. On the one hand, there is a risk of long-term dependency, with the daughter church becoming less willing to take risks or be missionally entrepreneurial [Crawshaw]. Equally, an unwillingness by the mother church to 'let go' of the daughter church can be a source of frustration to the daughter church. On the other hand, the daughter church needs to recognise its need for resources and to keep the lines of communication open; seeking independence too soon from a mother church may be damaging to a daughter church. There can be benefit in having a written agreement between a mother and a daughter church, setting out clear expectations regarding support and future independence [Dale].

Repotting church plants have the potential of revitalising a parish while at the same time providing the church plant with material resources. However, there is a risk of the church planter and the core team wanting to bring too much change too soon, leading to conflict with the original congregation. The original congregation, while welcoming the new members, may be very resistant to any change. The best path may be to keep the two congregations separate, making minimal changes to the original congregation [Cocking].

There can be tension between **Pioneering church plants** and the parishes within which they are located. Of the several interviews conducted with pioneering church planters for this study, some indicated that this had been a serious issue for them. Key to resolving tensions is communication and a willingness to collaborate. In particular there needs to be communication concerning people who wish to transfer from nearby parishes to the church plant; it may be appropriate for the leader of the church plant to request attenders not to do so. But there also needs to be an honest appraisal of whether the church plant is reaching people that the parish cannot reach effectively.

There were stories of partnership told by interviewees, demonstrating how Pioneering churches and established parishes, and Mother and Daughter churches, can work together effectively in the building of the Kingdom of God. Instances of Repotted churches in the study had at their root recognition by an existing parish that help was needed and an invitation for people to come. There were examples of daughter church plants set up in neighbouring parishes at the invitation or with the blessing of those parishes. These accounts suggest that it can be done well, but that there needs to be a genuine spirit of collaboration between the parties.

Pioneering church plants are a special case, usually commencing with no formal support from the Diocese or parishes and with no property assets. Consequently the need for support is heightened; interviewees spoke of not only gathering financial supporters but also relational supports. Spousal support is essential, whether the spouse is directly involved in the church plant or not [Hall, Neal]. Peer networks can also be important sources of relational support. Peter and Elizabeth Wood spoke of the importance of support networks, since their view was that "church planters who go it alone are most at risk of peril." In planting the Ropes Crossing church, they sought support from the local rector. Support also came from ENC and Geneva Push, as well as networks of Christian friends.

4.10 Finances

Finances are a key factor in the long-term survival of church plants. Pioneering church plants are particularly vulnerable, especially in lower socio-economic areas. Interviews with Pioneering church planters revealed they usually create a financial base from a variety of sources, including from a network of supporters (eg friends, people from a previous church), giving from attenders, and spousal income.

Among Mother-daughter church plants there were examples of church plants that closed because of the competing need for resources in a multi-church situation or where parish priorities were in transition. In this

respect, daughter church plants located outside the parish area may be more vulnerable. NESB and special interest congregations may only remain viable through leaders raising additional funds.

4.11 Reasons that Church Plants Fail

In view of the resources and energy invested into church planting, it is very important to identify possible causes of failure and to develop best practice to mitigate such factors where possible. Although dozens of church planters have published about their experience of failure and many opinion pieces have been posted on the internet, these sources are sometimes contradictory and offer little by way of supporting data. After conducting a literature search into church planting, the Presbyterian Church (NSW) concluded that regarding the reasons behind the failure of church plants “no simple answer will suffice” (Macintyre 2012, 33).

In line with this conclusion, interviewees in the current study described a variety of factors and situations that contributed to church plant failures, which are summarised below. However the interviews also suggest that it is important to keep the issue of failure in perspective. ‘Risk’ and ‘trial and error’ were frequently used terms in the interviews which embody the possibility of failure as well as success. Failure can also be a teacher; where multiple church plants are occurring, the failure of some of those plants may provide important lessons leading to the success of others [Jensen].

The role of the leader: Church plants can falter for a variety of reasons. However since much emphasis is placed upon the importance of the leader as a factor in successful church planting, interviewees in the current study identified the leader as a factor in the failure of most church plants. Being relatively small entities, with viability threatened by even small decreases in attendance, failure can come about through:

- The leader not being well suited as a church planter
- The leader falling ill or having to resign due to changed circumstances
- The leader becoming discouraged by slow attendance growth or other factors
- Poor or unethical leadership, resulting in relationship breakdowns or a split in the church
- Poor choice of succeeding leader, after the founding leader has moved on.

Mismatch between church plant and target group: Sometimes church plants have failed because of having the wrong leader or core team for the target group, or the church plant being in the wrong location for the target group. One interviewee spoke of the failure to plan for growth in mainland Chinese attenders, leading to a cultural disconnect between the core team and new attenders. Another interviewee spoke of a church plant being located too far away for the target student population to access easily.

Failure of the church plant to reach a viable size: One interviewee outlined how despite receiving some income from the mother church, the church plant eventually folded due to the transience of the target population. Despite often seeing people being converted, the church never reached a viable size, because attenders frequently moved to other areas.

Insufficient missional motivation: One interviewee told the story of a daughter church started in rented premises as an overflow congregation for a mother church that had reached capacity. However the daughter church had not been founded with a desire to reach out in the new environment. Soon there was dissatisfaction with the church plant and a move to rejoin with the original congregation. New church services can also be commenced from a sense of dissatisfaction with the existing congregation and wanting to be free to do something different. Again, founding a church plant for reasons other than missional ones can increase the likelihood of closure.

Core team exhaustion: In a school situation where chairs and equipment need to be set up every week, where attendances have stalled and outreach doesn’t appear to be working, members of the core team can lose heart and want to move on. Leader exhaustion can also arise where the leader needs to pick up the slack because attenders are no longer fulfilling roles that they once did.

Changing parish priorities: There were a couple of interviews where the existence of daughter church plants was threatened due to changing parish priorities. In one instance, a church plant lost financial support from the mother church and its leader redeployed due to competing financial needs within the parish.

Diocesan requirements: A factor in one church eventually reaching the point of closure had to do with the requirement for a rectory. This particular plant couldn't become independent of the mother church, since to become a separate parish would have required a rectory, which was unaffordable.

5. Parishes that Plant Churches

5.1 Key Enablers

The fourth research question asked **“What are the key enablers for parishes to engage in church planting?”** As with the second research question, the literature identifies discrete characteristics or factors that appear to enable some churches to undertake church planting, whilst the absence of such enablers presents a barrier to involvement.

5.1.1 Theological Commitment and Cultural Characteristics

Churches that are well suited to church planting possess a strong theological commitment to the idea that supporting new congregations is as natural and vital an activity as worship, evangelism, fellowship, education and service (Keller 2012, 354-355). Churches that have a strong theology of mission – which among other things is expressed in regular contact between the church and all supported ministries, running mission conferences, possessing a defined mission strategy etc. – are well suited to church planting (Hesselgrave 2000, 485-501). Mother churches highly value seeing lost people come to Christ (McCrary 2001). Mother churches are able to give spiritual insight and direction, playing the role of mature partner in the accountability relationship and providing doctrinal foundation and stability. The greater the shared theological commitment, the more likely that a fruitful partnership will continue and grow (McCrary 2001).

Churches suited to church planting have a ‘wholly evangelistic’ culture. Evangelistic programs that are grafted onto unwilling churches will not successfully support church planting (Keller 2012, 359). They are ‘missional’ rather than ‘mission-minded’; an attitude of caring about mission is insufficient. Planting churches must adopt a missional posture, deliberately learning and adapting to the culture while remaining biblically sound (Stetzer 2006, 42).

Apart from a commitment to mission, a church wishing to plant needs to have a *generous* culture that is willing to:

- Give away resources and lose control of money, members and leaders (Keller 2012, 357)
- Give up control of the shape of the daughter ministry itself (which must be allowed to develop its own voice, emphases etc.) (Keller 2012, 358; McCrary 2001)
- Care more for the growth of the Kingdom of God than for its own ‘tribe’ (Keller 2012, 358).

5.1.2 Congregational Capacity

Ideally churches need to have a relatively large congregation from which to form the core of a plant, including diversity in age, gender and background (Hadaway 2007). As discussed earlier in this report, ideally the mother church needs to be able to spare 30 or more people for a launch team. The mother church usually provides financial support for a period, supplementing the leader’s stipend. The church may also provide temporary ministry leaders, professional/administrative support etc. (McCrary 2001). The mother church needs a good critical mass that won’t leave it too greatly depleted; a core group willing to go, with both groups committed to the plant; a leader set apart to be fully involved in the church plant. As much as possible the church plant should be done from a position of strength to give it the best chance of succeeding [Cocking].

Large parishes are often in the best position to undertake church planting. While it is prudent to make best use of existing on-site capacity, for some churches it is an imperative because their site constraints mean that they cannot grow beyond certain limits [Hall, Lim]. One of the disadvantages of the large church or ‘mega’ church model is the need for larger auditoriums, larger ancillary facilities such as kitchens, meeting rooms and offices and larger car parks. Rev Bruce Hall explained that this was a ‘push’ factor in the

Carlingford & North Rocks parish becoming more involved in church planting. Growing congregations with limited building capacity and a decision not to fund an enlarged auditorium were factors in the parish undertaking more off-site church plants [Hall].

In the situation where there are multiple church plants, coordination becomes an important factor in contributing to the success of each church plant. Issues arise around communication, congregations staying aware of each other's needs and activities, sharing of resources and prioritisation in the budget of the needs of each site. There can be issues around the provision of childrens' programs for all congregations, youth groups and shared leadership [Kellahan, Katay].

5.1.3 Partnership

Key to successful church planting is a continuing partnership between the mother church and church plant. Foundationally, this involves having a clear shared vision and direction (Hadaway 2007). McCrary (2001) lists several features of the role that mother churches should play:

- The church views the daughter plant as a partner in ministry. Teamwork is more important than control (eg. over finances, secondary doctrine, polity)
- Provides emotional encouragement. Church planting is an exhausting task
- Provides credibility to the new church within the wider community. Larger mother churches tend to have developed reputations that can help a new plant's credibility
- Assumes responsibility for starting the new church. The mother church doesn't merely sponsor, it owns responsibility for initiating, developing and encouraging each new congregation
- Adequately prepared to start a new church. Spiritual, mental and organisational readiness is key to daughter-church success
- Totally committed to the success of the new church start. Sacrificially giving, praying, occasional shared services/conferences, recruiting, publicity, counsel etc.
- Establishes a mutually agreed covenant that clearly outlines the relationship and responsibilities for both parties
- Proactive bi-directional communication. Neither party assumes the other is responsible
- Mutually agreed accountability measures, since trouble will inevitably come
- Respects autonomy of the new daughter church.

A key aspect mentioned in the interviews was that the church planting moment should be used as an opportunity for the senior minister to discuss the vision and goals with both the mother church and the church plant. This is to ensure that the mother church also has a sense of purpose and direction and to avoid the sense of having been left behind. It also needs to be recognised that the planting moment can be a trigger for some people to leave the church; it is important that the mother church also be rejuvenated at the same time [Cocking].

5.2 Impacts on the Mother Church

The involvement of churches in planting another church is often not just a one-off event. The cycle of church planting and its impacts can have enabling or disabling effects on mother churches in relation to any future church planting. These impacts are discussed below.

5.2.1 Attendance Re-Growth

Some research has found a correlation between church planting and attendance growth in the five years after planting (Farmer 2003). Some interviewees in the current study also spoke of seeing eventual recovery in the numbers of attenders at sending congregations [Jensen, Hall, Dale]. For instance, St Pauls Carlingford

was involved in multiple church plants in the 1990s and 2000s, involving the same sending congregation. Each time the mother congregation eventually returned to previous attendance levels [Hall].

It is unknown to what extent the regrowth phenomenon has occurred among mother churches in the Diocese. However as shown in Table 4 below, mother churches in 2011 had double the average weekly attendance than churches in the Diocese, even after having been involved in church planting in the previous 5 years.

5.2.2 Emotional and Relational Impacts

As mentioned earlier, it is important that mother churches not feel as though they have been forgotten or left behind. Two interviewees in the current study recounted instances of a mother church that either wasn't cared for or had become so damaged by the planting experience that long-term pastoral care was needed.

Emotional impact can occur in other ways. Friendships can be put under strain or lost when people leave for a church plant. In one church plant discussed in an interview, a number of key people from the mother church went to the church plant. But when it failed, rather than returning to the mother church, these people left the parish altogether. Another interviewee recounted that the impact of multiple church planting on a mother congregation was that the original members became exhausted by the experience of planting, while the presence of so many new people replenishing the numbers changed the 'vibe' of the congregation.

On the other hand, when church plants go well, this can have a positive emotional impact, including the experience of the following (McCrary 2001):

- enhanced recognition of the sovereignty of God in blessing his work, which increases the perceived value of, and practical participation in, mission
- an expanded concern for and practical support of God's mission in the world
- communal joy and a sense of accomplishment.

5.2.3 Mission 2020 Indicators

NCLS vitality and attendance measures have been derived for mother churches that planted another church during the five years prior to the 2011 NCLS – ie 2007 to 2011. Table 4 below compares the NCLS statistics of these mother churches with Diocesan averages. The table shows very little difference between mother churches and the Diocesan average across a range of church vitality measures. Regarding attendance measures, the figures show that average weekly attendances are much higher at mother churches and that there are higher proportions of young people aged 15-29 years.

**Table 4
Mother Churches (2007-11)
Percentage of Attenders**

	Mother Churches	DIOCESE
		
		
Church Vitality		
	Much growth in faith	48% 47%
	Private devotions – every day/most days	44% 43%
	Use of gifts and skills to a great extent	21% 21%
	Look for opportunities to share the faith with others	18% 18%
	Invited someone to church in the past year	41% 40%
	Fully committed to the vision/directions of the congregation	44% 41%
Attender Characteristics		
	Newcomers	8% 9%
	Born in a Non-English Speaking country	12% 16%
	15-29 year olds	30% 22%
Church Characteristics		
	Average Weekly Attendance	288 150

SOURCE: 2011 NCLS

6. Diocesan Support for Church Planting

Given the central place of church planting in *Mission 2020*, it is important that the Diocese create an optimal environment both for the establishment of church plants and their long-term viability. During this study, a number of suggestions have been put forward by interviewees that should be considered in the light of the study findings. Among these interviewees were Bruce Hall (Director of Evangelism and New Churches (ENC)), Phillip Jensen (former Dean of Sydney) and Andrew Katay (CEO, City to City Australia).

6.1 Recruitment, Coaching and Training

The Diocese currently gives support to church planting through ENC. The Evangelism and New Churches Ordinance 2010 provides a legal structure for churches that are not part of a parish. ENC currently works alongside Pioneering and other church plants, providing access to coaching, training in administration and assistance with business processes (eg. insurance, accounting, legal and compliance support). Other church planting organisations such as Geneva Push and City to City play important roles in recruiting, assessing, coaching, training and mentoring church planters. ENC plays a role in brokering these services on behalf of the Diocese. Among interviewees in this study, there was clear support for ENC and these associated organisations and for the continuation of ENC's role into the foreseeable future. However at the same time concern was raised that, other than ENC, there is little Diocesan support available to Pioneering churches. The coaching and training requirements of the leaders of Mother-daughter churches should also be considered in the light of the levels of survival of these church plants, as highlighted in this study.

It is important that potential church planters be attracted to and identified at Moore College, as the main training organisation for ministers in the Diocese. In this respect, an expanded role for MT&D in providing training not only in church planting but also in the ongoing professional development of ministers has been suggested [Katay]. Concerns were raised about whether Moore College could be doing more to attract potential church planters, given the fundamental importance of identifying and nurturing evangelists for church planting roles [Jensen]. For this reason the ENC office should be located at Moore College [Hall]. The view was expressed that it is very important that the Diocese find the right candidates and properly resource them - even if this means doing less church plants [Dale, Neal].

6.2 Strategic Planning and Coordination

There is a need for an agency that has a strategic overview of church planting in the Diocese, capable of undertaking demographic analysis and providing advice to senior leadership, parishes and church planters. An expanded and well-resourced ENC could provide this kind of strategic direction, as it has the right governance structure and is independent [Jensen]. ENC could have as part of its brief a role in addressing the following strategic issues.

A regional approach to Mother-daughter church planting: At present parishes generally plant Mother-daughter churches within their own parish area. However there is a place for Mother-daughter churches to be planted within other parishes, with the blessing or partnership of those parishes. For instance, newly married couples often settle further out within the same urban corridor as the suburbs in which they were raised. Or if renting they may choose to move closer to the CBD. A potential strategy would be for larger parishes to be planting along the urban corridor, in order to keep younger attenders within the church network, rather than risk losing them altogether from church life [Jensen]. Larger parishes could also be encouraged to lend people and resources to smaller parishes to assist with Mother-daughter planting, or to directly sponsor church planting in less resourced parishes [O'Mara].

A regional approach to NESB church planting: The local parish focus of the Anglican system means that when it comes to NESB ministry, it is difficult to see the bigger metropolitan picture. By comparison, independent and NESB congregations in other denominations are not locally constrained and have regional

strategies. Some of these congregations are very large whereas the majority of Anglican NESB congregations are less than 100 attenders. A perceived issue in Chinese ministry more broadly is the level of competition for attenders. This suggests a need for closer cooperation between NESB congregations in Anglican parishes, partnering together or perhaps combining some congregations, with a view to becoming more missionally effective [Heazlewood & Wu].

At the other end of the spectrum, some NESB congregations have grown to the extent that they have become the main congregation in their parish or a parish in their own right. In these situations the NESB leadership need to transition in their thinking from being solely responsible for a single ethnic group to being responsible for a wider range of people, as required in parish ministry. An exemplar of where such a transition has occurred successfully is St Andrews Strathfield [Jensen]. It is likely that more leaders of NESB congregations will face this challenge in the future as Sydney's ethnic diversity continues to increase.

Some interviewees spoke enthusiastically about a partnership model of NESB ministry whereby an independent NESB congregation is hosted by an Anglican parish [Heazlewood & Wu, Kellahan]. The parish of Killara initially hosted the Philadelphia parish, an existing Chinese congregation without property. A big advantage has been that the partnership provided the critical mass needed for Killara to reach out more effectively to 1st generation Chinese, which had not been achieved at that stage through Killara's existing ESL ministry [Heazlewood & Wu]. Similarly the hosting of Grace Church by the East Roseville parish has provided a welcome boost and has the potential of developing into a partnership between the parish and NESB congregation [Kellahan].

Furthermore it has been suggested that the Diocese should identify major migrant groupings and proactively recruit and train leaders to reach these groups [Hall]. Although the Diocese is well represented among Chinese, Indian and Korean people, it is greatly under-represented among most other NESB groups (Bellamy, 2013, 10-11).

Discovery and promotion of innovative forms of church planting: New expressions of church life will need to be developed in response to future cultural changes in the wider society. The Diocese should invest in experimental church planting that could lead to new models and build a bridge to new realities [Crawshaw].

6.3 Conflict Resolution

As discussed earlier, there can be tension between Pioneering church plants and the parishes within which they are located. There is an inherent challenge in integrating new churches into an existing system of parishes. Often the issue is the perceived threat to the parish of the church plant attracting attenders from the parish, especially young people. Key to resolving tensions is effective two-way communication and willingness to collaborate. However there also needs to be an honest appraisal as to whether the church plant is reaching people that the parish is not reaching [Wood, Jensen]. Parishes need to demonstrate that they are doing all they can to reach out to the diversity of people in the parish – that they are fulfilling their responsibilities to people in the area [Jensen]. Rather than seeing the church plant as a competitor, the injection into the parish of the new congregation led by an evangelist will increase evangelism overall [Jensen]. An expanded ENC could play a role in identifying parishes struggling to reach the range of people in the parish, which could be complemented by the establishment from outside the parish of a well-targeted church plant.

Diocesan leaders can play a role in diffusing tensions and promoting trust and partnerships between church plants and existing parishes. One interviewee mentioned how the regional bishop had intervened to enable a plant to go ahead at a university campus. Another mentioned how being invited to become part of the Mission Area gatherings had provided a forum for resolving tensions with the local parish. ENC has played an important role in advocating on behalf of church plants to both Diocesan leaders and parish rectors [Jensen].

Sometimes the Diocese itself can be the source of tension for church plants. The Diocese needs to have a flexible approach towards church plants, especially around requirements that increase church planting costs (eg. level of stipend, housing costs) [Powell, Lim].

6.4 Funding Sources for Church Plants

The Diocese has committed to the purchase of sites for 'Greenfields' church plants as part of *Mission 2020*. While this is an important priority, relatively few of the church plants in this report are Greenfields church plants, most being located in existing urban areas (ie 'Brownfields' locations).

However this report has highlighted that there are ongoing issues of viability and future property requirements for church plants that may not be capable of resolution within the existing parish structure. There are two particular areas of expenditure which have been identified that need to be considered:

- i. Assistance with capital expenditures for churches established under the Department of Evangelism and New Churches Ordinance 2010, such as worship space, office space or housing
- ii. Recurrent expenditures associated with church plants working primarily with people who are more likely to be disadvantaged or more likely to be living on very low incomes (eg. public housing residents, people living with mental illness, students, refugees, some migrant groups, Aboriginal people).

In support of the first suggestion, the point has been made that much of Sydney's population growth is projected for Brownfields areas, but that all of the capital expenditure for church planting is going into Greenfields areas [Hall]. Yet a lack of a permanent location presents a constant risk of disruption to church plants that must lease premises [Crawshaw]. Assistance in purchasing housing may be enough to provide a permanent base for a Pioneering church plant. Over the long-term, purchasing a house leads to increasing equity in the property and tapering mortgage repayments, whereas leasing a house only carries the prospect of ever increasing rents with no lasting security of tenure [Paterson].

In support of the second suggestion, attendance growth is much slower among church plants working with people who are disadvantaged. Financial giving is a difficult issue for leaders when attenders have very little income to begin with. The prospect of such ministries mostly relying upon individual donors over a long period may be unrealistic [Paterson]. Loans and grants which end after a few years assume a level of attendance growth and giving that is unrealistic for such church plants. Longer term subsidisation is needed if the Gospel is to be made more widely known among people living with disadvantage [Pickford] or in order to connect with 'hard-to-reach' ethnic groups [Hall]. A financial model which involves equal annual contributions by the Diocese, attenders and individual donors would provide greater long-term financial stability without developing 'welfare dependency'.

As part of the second suggestion, the effectiveness of some NESB ministries could be expanded through meeting certain occasional costs, such as the cost of running courses for migrants and refugees and in subsidised access to church conference facilities [Neyshaboury].

Apart from direct funding support of church plants through Diocesan grants, several ideas have been shared by interviewees in relation to how these funding issues could be tackled, including the following:

- Encouraging the sponsorship of smaller churches by larger parishes [O'Mara]
- Exploring the possibility of loans through organisations such as City to City Australia or grants through the Genesis Foundation [Katay]
- Establishment of a Diocesan fund to be used for providing revolving loans to 'Brownfields' church plants [Katay]
- Identification of under-utilised church property which parishes should be encouraged to make available for use by church plants [Jensen]

- Revival of Anglicare’s Home Mission Society role in working with parishes to identify and open up assets to church planters [Jensen]
- Assistance from agencies such as ENC and flexibility by the Diocese to allow church plants to develop ‘tent-making’ forms of income (eg. the leader having a high-paying part-time job) [Lim]
- Assistance in developing social enterprises as an adjunct to the church plant, such as an opportunity shop [Pickford]
- The Diocese holding a fundraising event or campaign on behalf of several church plants. Such an approach would save duplication of effort by each of the church plants having to work on their own to raise funds.

7. Conclusions

What conclusions can now be drawn from this study? A series of conclusions are drawn here, organised according to the research questions addressed by the study. Some recommendations arising from these conclusions then follow.

7.1 Which Church Plants have Gone Well or Folded?

Survival rate: New church services are the most numerous of the five models of church planting examined in this report; it is estimated that around 70% of new church services commenced since 2002 are still operating. Similarly around 70% of NESB/Aboriginal congregations and 60% of Mother-daughter church plants are still operating. A far smaller number of Repotting and Pioneering church plants have been commenced during the same period; of those identified through this study all have survived. The fact that most church plants continue to operate after many years is a very significant achievement but the folding of about a third of all church plants also represents a substantial loss.

New commencements: There is evidence presented in this report that the rate of commencement of new church plants has slowed markedly since 2011. In view of the importance of church planting as a strategy in the Diocesan Mission, effort is now needed to encourage further church planting in the Diocese and to preserve and enhance the viability of those church plants that already exist.

7.2 How Successful has each Church Planting Model been?

Missional impact: This study, both through the statistics and interviews, provides evidence that all models of church plant have had positive missional impacts in the Diocese. Off-site church plants and NESB congregations have above-average levels of newcomers and individual missional activity among attenders. The average levels of newcomers at Pioneering and NESB congregations recorded through the 2011 NCLS already achieved the targets set under *Mission 2020*, while the average level of individual inviting activity at NESB congregations significantly exceeded the *Mission 2020* target. NESB congregations also had more than twice the Diocesan average of *first-time* newcomers.

However there is evidence that the missional impact of church plants can vary, with some church plants having high levels of community connection and integration of newcomers while others have low or no newcomer inflows. A key issue to be considered is whether more can be done to enhance the missional impact of church plants. This issue is all the more important when considered in the light of the decline in the newcomer inflow and the modest level of attendance growth in the Diocese over the past 20 years (Bellamy 2013).

Attendance levels and financial viability: As shown by the interviews it has been common for church plants of all kinds to start with small launch teams, requiring significant attendance growth to take place to bring the church plant to a viable size. There is evidence that many off-site church plants still have relatively low attendances, with about half of Mother-daughter church plants and some Pioneering and Repotted churches having less than 70 attenders each week (adults and children). It is likely that many Mother-daughter church plants receive continuing support within the parish structure in order to stay viable.

It is also clear from interviews in the study that church plants which work with people from lower socio-economic groups or people suffering from disadvantage find it harder to achieve viability, due to lower giving levels and slower attendance growth. Church planting among particular migrant groups and among students can also be difficult from the viewpoint of financial viability. Subsidising such church plants should be considered in order to maintain or expand ministry to these particular groups.

Of the five models of church planting examined in this study **Pioneering church plants** are often targeted towards younger age groups or particular socio-economic groups. Pioneering church plants have the

flexibility to narrow their target audience because they do not have the same responsibility as a parish to minister to all kinds of people, and have greater freedom around structure and location. The evidence of this study is that the Pioneering church plants that took part in the 2011 NCLS have been missionally effective in attracting higher-than-average levels of newcomers and high proportions of young adults. There is also a range of anecdotal evidence provided by the interviews that more recent church plants are experiencing high newcomer inflows and conversions.

The Evangelism and New Churches Ordinance and support provided by the Diocese through ENC have helped to foster a small number of Pioneering church plants in the past five years. However in view of the acknowledged difficulties in commencing Pioneering church plants there have been relatively few established in the Diocese since 2001. The evidence from the interviews is that, in the current environment, the leaders of Pioneering church plants need to be highly gifted individuals able to develop a church from scratch with little outside support. Therefore financial viability is a key issue for Pioneering church plants since these do not have the resources of a parish and must draw together and maintain a range of supports in order to stay viable. A major challenge in the future for Pioneering churches is being able to afford to buy property, which would assist in providing long-term stability and a permanent local footprint for such churches.

Repotting church plants require a special set of circumstances: a struggling church that recognises that it needs outside help and a church able to release a large number of people to join that church. Consequently repottings have been few in number since 2001 but have been relatively successful. However it was noted through the interviews that while there are certain attractions to the repotting model, it can be tough to implement due to the differing expectations of the host congregation and the new members about the need for, and extent of, change.

Mother-daughter church plants are easier to launch than other off-site church planting models, being able to draw the leader, launch team, financial support and administrative support (eg. payroll, insurance, accounting, legal and compliance support) from within the parish. The rector can also supervise, mentor and encourage the leader of the plant. However, Mother-daughter churches also have higher failure rates than other models examined here and generally have lower levels of newcomers and young adults than other church planting models. Given that Mother-daughter plants are the most common form of off-site church plant in the Diocese, there is a need to improve the performance of Mother-daughter plants where possible, such as through the dissemination of information about best-practice and providing more access to training, mentoring and coaching.

There has been a sharp increase since 2001 in the number of **Non-English Speaking Background congregations** in the Diocese with around 70% of commencements having survived, largely within the parish structure. Like Mother-daughter church plants, NESB congregations can benefit in starting from a parish base. The statistical evidence presented in this report regarding church vitality and missional effectiveness appears positive. NESB congregations do have particular requirements that make them harder to establish than conventional church services, such as requiring a leader fluent in the language of the ethnic group. The leader is usually fluent in English as well, a necessity where they have trained through Moore College. The interviews in the study have shown that the approach and emphasis of such congregations can vary considerably, according to whether the congregation is primarily for 1st or 2nd generation migrants, permanent residents or transient people, or people from a higher or lower socio-economic background.

The commencement of **New church services** is by far the most common expression of church planting in the Diocese, being the easiest of the five models to launch. While a new service can simply be a copy of another existing service held in a different timeslot, there was evidence in the study of some new services being purpose-built to reach new target groups or attempting to be culturally attractive to those currently outside of church life. The statistical evidence presented in this report is largely positive regarding the vitality of New church services, which also have above average levels of young adults. Overall, however, there was no

difference between the average level of newcomers in a sample of New church services and the Diocese as a whole.

7.3 What Factors Contribute to Church Plants Succeeding or Folding?

7.3.1 Key Factors in Success

The study report has canvassed a wide range of factors that have been identified through the literature review and interviews as contributing to the success or otherwise of church plants. Factors that emerged as primary factors are outlined below.

1. The church planting leader: The leader was often nominated in the interviews as the key factor in the success or failure of church plants. Three key qualities of successful church planters have been identified in this report: being an evangelist (motivated and active in reaching the Lost); being an innovator (starting new things, flexible, adaptable); being a relational leader (gathers people to bring about the church planting vision). For NESB congregations, the leader's ethnicity is another key factor. Apart from these intrinsic characteristics, there are aspects of what the church planter does on the job that affect success including being fully available for the task, being a good communicator, seizing opportunities and perseverance.

2. People who support the leader: The launch or core team needs to complement the leader by having the same convictions about mission and the same commitment to making the church plant succeed. There needs to be an agreed vision between the leader and core team about what it is they want to achieve. A range of gifts and skills are needed, even in small teams, which cover central functions: outreach, worship, children's program, finance and property. While there is no minimum size of core team, church planters should aim to recruit at least 30 adults to the team. Spousal support is critical and mentoring or coaching was also nominated as important to the ongoing success of the plant.

3. Contextualising the church plant's ministry and mission: Several principles emerged across the church planting models examined here, including:

- Undertaking the church plant for missional reasons, with a target group/locality clearly defined
- Researching and understanding the target group/ local community
- Shaping the life of the church plant in the light of the culture and local context of the target group including developing culturally appropriate church services, meetings (eg. around meals) and outreach.
- Raising awareness and the profile of the church plant in the wider community
- Connecting effectively with the target group and/or being part of the local community (eg. participation in community events, practical service)
- Appropriate systems for keeping track of attendance and timely follow-up.

4. Partnerships and financial viability: Supportive partnerships emerge as a key factor. Successful church planting requires a host parish and/or supporters in order to become established and be sustainable. A firm financial footing is a key factor in the long-term survival of church plants.

7.3.2 Partnership and Communication between New and Existing Churches

Each model of off-site church planting carries with it the potential for conflict. Repotted church plants need to negotiate change with the host congregation; Pioneering church plants can be seen as competitors by existing parishes and Mother-daughter churches need to have a shared vision and clear expectations with their mother churches. Ongoing communication is needed, both before and after the establishment of the church plant, with the aim of each party recognising the other as a partner in mission. While these issues may not necessarily bring down a church plant, failures of communication can make the task much tougher.

7.3.3 Reasons for Church Plant Failure

The interviews revealed that the leader can be at the centre of a church plant failure as much as its success. While it may be tempting to blame the leader for all such failures, it was also clear from the interviews that there is a wide variety of factors and circumstances that can lead to church plants failing apart from the leader, including financial issues, property and locational issues, parish priorities, failures by the core team and mismatches between the church plant and the target group. A combination of these factors was usually part of the explanation as to why particular church plants failed.

7.4 What are Key Enablers for Parishes to Engage in Church Planting?

Key enablers for parishes seeking to undertake church planting include:

- **A theological and missional outlook** which is conducive to a parish wanting to engage in or support church planting as an ongoing missional activity
- **A sufficiently large and diverse sending congregation** that is able to set aside and then recover from sending out a leader and launch team to plant another congregation
- **A generous culture** that is prepared to support and partner with the church plant into the future.

Impacts on churches that plant: Churches that have planted off-site church plants have *Mission 2020* indicators that are little different to the Diocesan average. In addition, average attendances at these churches were much higher than the Diocesan mean; there was anecdotal evidence that mother churches do eventually return to their former levels of attendance. However there were examples identified in the study of mother churches that had been scarred by the experience of church planting. There is a need to recast the vision for both churches as part of the church planting exercise and to ensure that the mother church does not feel left behind or neglected.

7.5 The Role of the Diocese in Church Planting

Apart from its significant role in purchasing sites for new churches in Greenfields locations, the Diocese plays an important but limited supporting role in Brownfields locations through the Evangelism & New Churches (ENC) agency. This report has canvassed how the role of the Diocese could be extended in the areas of:

- Recruitment and training of church planters
- Identification of church planting opportunities and strategic planning at a regional level
- Identification of resources and assets to assist church planting
- Conflict resolution, particularly between church plants and parishes
- Assistance in fundraising.

Consideration should be given to expanding the role and resourcing of ENC to address each of these areas, as well as to enhance the current role of ENC in promoting and maintaining church plants. There was general approval among interviewees regarding the role played by ENC and associated organisations such as Geneva Push, but some suggestions that this valuable and proven model of support could be expanded beyond the current situation.

There was a theme across interviews about the need to increase funding for church plants in existing urban areas, both directly and indirectly. The key funding areas where support is most needed are some of the capital costs associated with Pioneering church plants and some of the recurrent or occasional costs associated with church plants ministering to groups more likely to experience disadvantage and particular ethnic groups. Apart from direct funding, a range of indirect funding initiatives have been suggested that should also be explored.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The findings of this report be received and considered in deciding the best way for the Diocese to support church planting as a key part of the Diocesan Mission, and to assist parishes and agencies in developing best practice approaches to church planting.
2. The Diocese maintain an ongoing register of church plants, building on the listings of church plants that accompany this report.
3. In view of the ability of parishes to commence New church services, Mother-daughter churches and NESB congregations, but also in view of the survival rates associated with these church planting models, best practice guidelines for church planting be prepared as part of *Mission 2020* and circulated widely to parishes as a matter of priority. These guidelines should be developed based upon research findings and the experience of successful church planters. Further consideration be given to other resources that may encourage and assist parishes in this endeavour, including access to training, mentoring and coaching.
4. Parishes be encouraged to consider supporting church planting carried out by other, less resourced parishes and supporting or working in partnership with Pioneering church plants.
5. In view of current low commencement rates and in the light of the Mission goal to launch two new churches in every Mission Area by 2020, the Diocese consider how to improve:
 - (a) Recruitment and training of potential church planters
 - (b) Identification of church planting opportunities and strategic planning at a regional level
 - (c) Identification of resources and assets to assist church planting
 - (d) Conflict resolution, particularly between new and existing churches.
6. An expanded role and appropriate resourcing be considered for ENC with a view to addressing Recommendations 5(a) to (d) above and to enable ENC to continue assisting church plants beyond existing levels.
7. The Diocese identify the strengths and weaknesses of the funding models underpinning the different models of church planting in the Diocese and how these could be enhanced.
8. The Diocese consider making funds available to support church plants in existing urban areas ('Brownfields' areas), particularly contributing to some of the capital costs associated with Pioneering church plants and some of the recurrent and occasional costs associated with these or other church plants ministering to groups more likely to experience disadvantage and particular ethnic groups.

References

- Assemblies of God: New Churches Western Australia (2004) *Western Australia Church Planting Manual*.
- Bellamy, J. (2013) *Diocesan Mission Indicators, Anglican Diocese of Sydney*, Report prepared for the *What's Next?* Committee, Parramatta: Anglicare Sydney.
- Bellamy, J., Black, A., Castle, K., Hughes, P. & Kaldor, P. (2002) *Why People Don't Go to Church*, Adelaide: Openbook.
- Bellamy, J. & Kemp, B. (2014) *Church Planting in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney – Results of Survey of Parish Rectors*, Parramatta: Anglicare Sydney.
- Bellamy, J., Sterland, S. & King, S. (2008) *Church Planting Research - A Report to the Diocesan Policy Group 4*, Parramatta: Anglicare Sydney.
- Bustle, L. & Crocker, G. (2010) *Principles of Church Planting: God Can Use You to Plant a Church*, Missional Church Initiative Eurasia: http://www.missionaleurasia.com/Principles_of_Church_Planting.pdf
- Chester, T. (2000) "Church Planting: A Theological Perspective", in Timmis, S. (ed) *Multiplying Churches*, Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus, pp 23-46.
- Church Planting Taskforce of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney (2014) *Report from the Church Planting Taskforce into the Church Planting Plans towards 2050*, Sydney: Anglican Diocese of Sydney.
- Conn, H. (1997) *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Dadswell, D. & Ross, C. (2013) *Church Growth Research Project: Church Planting*, Rippon College Cuddesdon: Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology.
- Farmer, J. (2003) *The Effect of Sponsoring a Church Plant on the Sponsor Church*, New Churches: www.newchurches.com/mediafiles/the-effect-of-sponsoring-a-church-plant-on-the-sponsor-church.pdf
- Hadaway, C. & Marler, P. (2001) *New Church Development: A Research Report*, NY: Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, Episcopal Church Center.
- Hadaway, C. (2007) *Facts on Episcopal Church Growth*, NY: Episcopal Church Center.
- Hesselgrave, D. (2000) *Planting Churches Cross-culturally*, 2nd edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics.
- Hopkins, B. & White, R. (1995) *Enabling Church Planting*, Coventry: CPAS.
- Keller, T. (2012) *Centre Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centred Ministry In Your City*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Keller, T. (2009) *Church Planting*, Paper presented to the Urban Plant-Life Conference, London, 12 May 2009.
- Macintyre, J.A. (2012) *Church Planting Research & Strategy Recommendations. Church Planting: Winning Hearts for the Future*. Sydney, NSW: Ministry & Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW. <http://churchplantingpcnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Church-Planting-winning-hearts-for-the-future.pdf>
- Malphurs, A. (2004) *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- McCrary, L. (2001) *More than money! A modified content analysis of written material regarding the relationship between sponsoring churches and their new church plants in the Southern Baptist Convention*, DMin Project Paper, Deerfield, IL: Trinity International University.

- Ott, C. and Wilson, G. (2011) *Global Church Planting. Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Rowley, R. J. (2005) *Successfully Coaching Church Planters*, Doctoral Dissertation, Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary.
- Shepherd III, J. (2003) *An Analysis of the North American Mission Board's Assessment Process for Selecting Church Planters*, thesis, Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Stetzer, E. (2007a) *Improving the health and survivability of new churches*, Leadership Network: http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/CP-2007-OCT-State_of_Church_Planting_Report_Health-Stetzer.pdf
- Stetzer, E. (2007b) *Who Starts New Churches*, Leadership Network: http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/CP-2007-OCT-State_of_Church_Planting_Report_Who_Starts-Stetzer.pdf
- Stetzer, E. (2006) *Planting Missional Churches*, Nashville TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- Stetzer, E. & Connor, P. (2007) *Research Report: Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007, USA*: North American Mission Board, Center for Missional Research.
- Thompson, J.A. (2007) *Church Leader Inventory: A PCA Qualitative and Quantitative Study*, Lawrenceville, GA: Presbyterian Church of America.
- Weldy, B. (2007) *Ideal Types: Church Planting Models*, thesis, Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Winseman, A. (2007) *Growing an Engaged Church: How to Stop 'Doing Church' and Start Being the Church Again*, Omaha, NE: Gallup Press.
- Wood, S. (2006) *Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times: Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Anglicare

