

Proposal to create the provisional parish of Ashbury

(A report of the South Sydney Regional Council.)

Initiation of Proposal

1. A proposal was made to the Archbishop by the churchwardens of St Matthew's, Ashbury on 25 May 2004 under the Parishes Ordinance 1979.

Details of Meeting

2. A meeting of the South Sydney Regional Council was held on 25 August 2004 to consider the proposal.

3. The South Sydney Regional Council certifies that all procedural requirements under clause 4 of the Parishes Ordinance have been complied with and noted that no objections have been received or expressed.

Details of the Proposal

4. The following details were given with regard to church property in the proposed provisional parish.

Buildings	Replacement Estimate \$	Condition of Building
Church	1,467,000	Good
Hall	663,000	Good
Rectory	361,000	Good
Shed	3,000	Good

5. The rectory is a single-storey brick building which meets diocesan requirements. It was purchased in 1928 and modified in 1986.

6. The church building was erected in 1956 and is a part two-storey building of brick with a tiled roof. There are no property debts in the proposed provisional parish.

7. On 17 September 1997, the South Sydney Regional Council, acting under clause 10(1) of the Parishes Ordinance 1979 amalgamated the then parish of St Matthew's, Ashbury with the parish of Summer Hill. This was the culmination of several difficult years for the parish of Ashbury and, after careful consideration, the step for amalgamation was taken. From 1998 to 2000, a Korean congregation had been renting the building and has continued using the church building in a reduced capacity since 2000.

8. Beginning in January 2001, the Greek Bible Fellowship, part of the St Matthias group of churches, entered into a lease arrangement with the parish of Summer Hill and Ashbury for the use of St Matthew's church and hall. However, their work grew quickly and it became obvious that the premises were too small for them to continue beyond the end of 2002. That congregation relocated to St David's, Arncliffe at the beginning of 2003.

9. What was then known as the Inner West Bible Fellowship led by Mr Peter Sholl applied to Summer Hill to become part of the parish and occupy the buildings at the Ashbury end. In a very happy relationship the congregation of St Andrew's gave every encouragement to the new church plant to grow and ultimately become a separate parish again.

People and Ministry

10. The 2001 census recorded the population of Ashbury as 3,089. 18.3% of these people claimed adherence to a protestant religion. If 75% of this 18.3% is estimated as adhering to the Anglican Church of Australia, the estimated number of Anglicans is 424.

11. There are currently 21 people residing within the boundaries of the proposed provisional parish who attend St Matthew's, Ashbury. It is reasonable to expect that this number will rise to 50 within the next two years.

12. At present there are 70 adults regularly attending St Matthew's with a children's ministry involving 35 children each Sunday. Mr Peter Sholl was ordained deacon in 2003 and priest in 2004. From its commencement at Marrickville West Public School, this congregation has seen its growth strategy strengthen to include reaching out both to people in neighbouring areas and in the network of relationships of members of the congregation.

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13. Currently growth strategies: Two main approaches are being adopted for the growth of St Matthew's, Ashbury.

14. The first is growth through young families and children. There is a busy and growing children's ministry with Sunday school and creche on Sunday mornings catering for children 0-7 years. The parish is in the process of training new Sunday school teachers to allow for a wider age range in classes. Parish members also teach six Scripture classes a week in Ashbury Public School which is a very community-based school. From contacts there parish members run KASAM, an after school kids club on Tuesday afternoons. There are presently 15 regulars representing three local primary schools.

15. Parish members also run a play group which has doubled in size in 2004 as local people have joined. From this group two families are now coming regularly to church and investigating Christianity.

16. The parish regularly tries to contact local families with a newsletter being distributed four times a year. 'St Matthew's News' aims to challenge the local community with a brief gospel-based article as well as advertising the events at St Matthew's. Response so far from this distribution has been positive.

17. A second approach to growth is through the networks of relationships of present members of the congregation, whether they be local, work-based or social networks. This is the predominate way in which the church has grown in its history.

18. As well as church meetings both Sunday morning and Sunday evening, the parish runs several specifically evangelistic activities throughout the year. These include a Christmas in July dinner, a gingerbread house-making event, a card-making event and guest speakers from Evangelism Ministries.

19. The parish continues to run regular training courses to train members in welcoming, evangelising and praying for others.

20. It currently trains one student minister and one MTS apprentice in order to take gospel ministry beyond its own borders. The parish is involved in the financial and prayerful support of a number of CMS missionaries as well as the work of the Anglican chaplaincy at the University of NSW.

Finances

21. A summary of the receipts and payments for the parish for the year ended 31 December 2003 is shown below -

Receipts	2003 \$
Offerories	97,646
Missions	8,377
Other	1,342
Trading activities	<u>779</u>
	108,144
Payments	
Staff expenses	50,879
Resources for ministry	7,062
Donations to missions	11,808
Parish administration	10,655
Repairs and maintenance	8,138
Other	<u>3,788</u>
	92,330

Proposed name

22. The proposed name is the Provisional Parish of Ashbury.

Recommendation

23. That Synod assent to the proposal for the formation of the Provisional Parish of Ashbury as from 1 January 2005.

For and on behalf of the South Sydney Regional Council

D K HOWELL
Archdeacon

16 September 2004