

Missional Mapping: Congregations & Regions

{Presbytery Discussions Feb 2022 Feedback Included}

The Presbytery of PPW as a Community Garden:

PPW want each congregational plot in our garden to thrive.

Our bold plan is within 10 years, every ministry context can be sustainable!

At the February Presbytery in Council (PiC) meeting we got these responses:

***What can the
image of
sustainable
gardens
teach us
about being
Church?***

- **God is the Gardener and we must be open to master plan.** Sometimes we just need to abide and be.
- Companion planting, faith sharing needs to be worked on. Collaboration needs to be between the right plants, congregations. You can't force the wrong plants, congregations to work, thrive together.
- Plants which don't fit in the new structure are not weeds just plants which need to be moved, transplanted for new growth to prosper same with people.
- Faith and prayer grow relationships with God and others.
- Small gardens within large gardens prosper, small groups eg home groups within larger group share compassion and love.
- Get rid of old systems, eg rosters, those who are there will do what is necessary.
- Sustainability requires change x2
- Need to continue to nurture.
- Be collaborative around sustainability and nurturing.
- Things don't happen by accident, good planning and design is needed.
- Right plant for environment, self-seeded can flourish.
- Lack of workforce. We need to cooperate with other congregation and the wider community.
- End of one thing not necessarily the end of all. When an old tree falls it nourishes the new growth.
- Pruning, composting etc. brings new growth some of it unexpected. Pruning can be good.
- The image is about abundance, not just maintenance and hard work. We need to sustainably grow what brings us joy
- We need to call /be called to lay and leadership roles.

At the February Presbytery in Council (PiC) meeting we asked two questions:

We asked if your congregation was a garden what does it look like?

What does your garden need to grow?

These conversations were so rich in metaphor people were clarifying 'Were you speaking metaphorically or literally about their church gardens?' In the same way if we knew the context for these comments they were telling indeed! But when we de-identified these comments, some lost their context and therefore lost meaning. Here are a few we have compiled for you.



We have some tall trees protecting the garden, over shadowing the younger plants. But what we most need is for the tall trees to fall over to allow in some sunlight. The old trees provide compost and nutrients for the next generation to grow.

We need to plant trees close to the boundary, so fruit can hang out and be offered widely.



For plants to be closer, with established plants supporting new seedlings.

Older rambling gardens are good too. Better connection between the different parts of the gardens. A desire to unify the old and the new.



REGIONS:

The Act2 National Assembly review held a meeting over two days with the presbytery ministers from across Australia. The conversation identified some common observations of how ministry is changing: declining numbers in congregations, less ministers. This may result in:

- 1) That the current congregational structure is not viable. Congregations are going to have to work together.
- 2) Every minister will resource multiple congregations and other contexts.
- 3) Future congregational structures could include Church hubs supporting many micro congregations around it.

At the February PiC meeting our on-line community discussed the advantages, disadvantages of regional ministry.

Regions Advantages

- Sharing of resources. Larger well resourced congregations can share/support smaller less well resourced and new establishing congregations
- Variety. Different places offer different things eg. in person, online, mix and match. Pulpit swapping.
- Digital technology has shown connections with different people and re-engagement with those who can no longer travel.
- Collaboration across the region.
- Support for ministers and those in lay and leadership roles.
- Remove duplication of events/ use of resources. eg. One regional youth group.
- Larger communities
- Raising of finances through selling of unneeded property

Regions Disadvantages

- Always fighting over who gets what.
- Distance a minister has to travel, more time in cars and more work.
- Mismatch of culture when congregations forced together. Some difficult histories.
- Loss of focus when minister has to spend time with more people.
- Another level of bureaucracy (congregation-region-presbytery)
- Challenge for a minister with multiple congregations with a designated time split. Role of ministry agent will need to change.
- One minister per congregation is best.
- Established congregations might see sharing as a diminishment of their entitlement.

Concerns about Regions

- Is it just the old Parish system?
- Teams need to get on well.
- Suggestion seems to be about structure not spirit.
- Concern about adequate communication consultation and participation in decision making processes. How will change be managed?
- Acceptance this is an option.
- Should linkages only be geographical.
- Need to be careful not to homogenize the diverse garden blocks.
- Need to make sure it is not just about the clergy and the need for full time placement.
- Will require a change in the way members see 'their' minister

What are the options? Eg. Minister placed to regions.

OUR PASSION

Vibrant, diverse, contextual mission and disciple-making churches. [Regenerating the Church 2022-2026]

VIBRANT: We encourage every congregation to seek to be sustainable within the next 10 years. This not seeking mere survival creating ministry placements that offer Pallative care to congregation who are dying, but rather sharing generously the abundant gifts of God. Smaller congregations who are brought together can be healthier and more vital.

DIVERSITY: Each region can be distinct and shaped by its local context, maintaining bio-diversity in the garden. Ministers are working from their strengths and using their God given gifts. One minister can choose worship liturgy. Another pastoral care. Another mission. Another building on-line communities. Another chooses education. Each resourcing a region according to their God given gifts.

DISCIPLESHIP MAKING: Is about everyone learning how to share their faith in Jesus Christ. Could it be about seeking training as Church Council members to be formed within the ethos of the UCA to be better equipped for the ministry we are elected too? Or it could be minister undertaking team building and team supervision?

COLLABORATION: These regions will not need to form councils to add another layer of governance. There could be regional gathers of leadership who collaborate on ministry and mission. Together we plot out how to thrive in the winds of change?

EXPLORING REGIONAL COLLABORATION: 3 Lenses



REGIONS: **DRAFT ONLY**

At February Presbytery in Council (PiC) the group gathered at Hoppers Crossing stood around a large map of the presbytery and discussed the congregations that might be in a region. They were advised to plan for at 8 - 12 ministry agents in each region to make collegial gatherings viable.

Notably, there was two approaches taken: Congregational reps to PIC were counting current placements and created 6 Regions. Presbytery were counting likely placements in the future and recommend Four Regions are viable the long term.

Key to Maps:

Bold= Presbytery / Wider Church Placements.

Vacant = No ministry Agent in placement; (0.5) part-time placement they can afford.

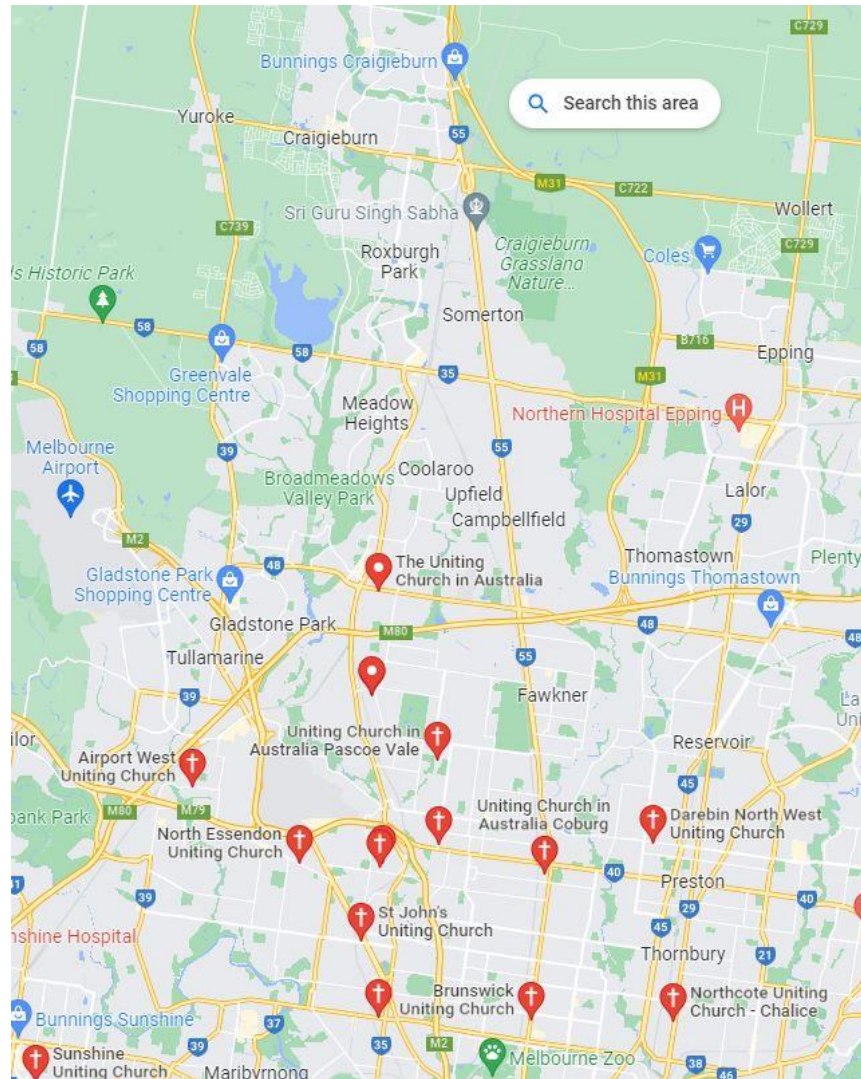
Lay = lay lead congregations.

Intercultural Communities are also named in case there is a regional approach raised, that is, linkages should not only be regional. 'Multi-cultural Congregation' as defined by eLM.

Congregations that are clustered together are joined by a hyphen -.

Region One: Here it was recommended that the Maribyrnong River be the dividing line. It was noted that within this region there had already been some informal collegial conversations. This group strongly identified with this region.

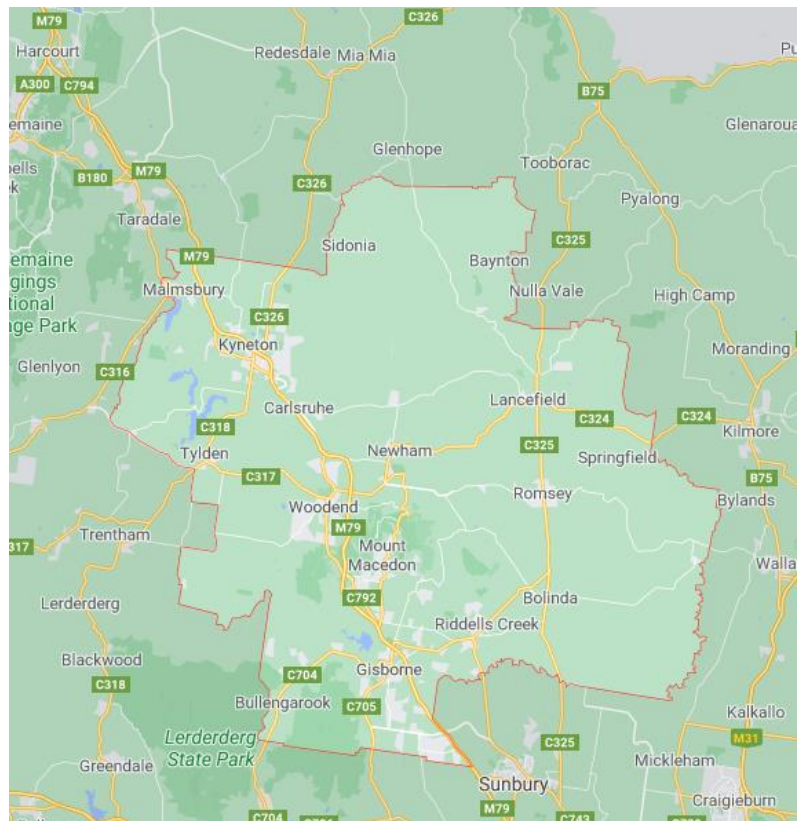
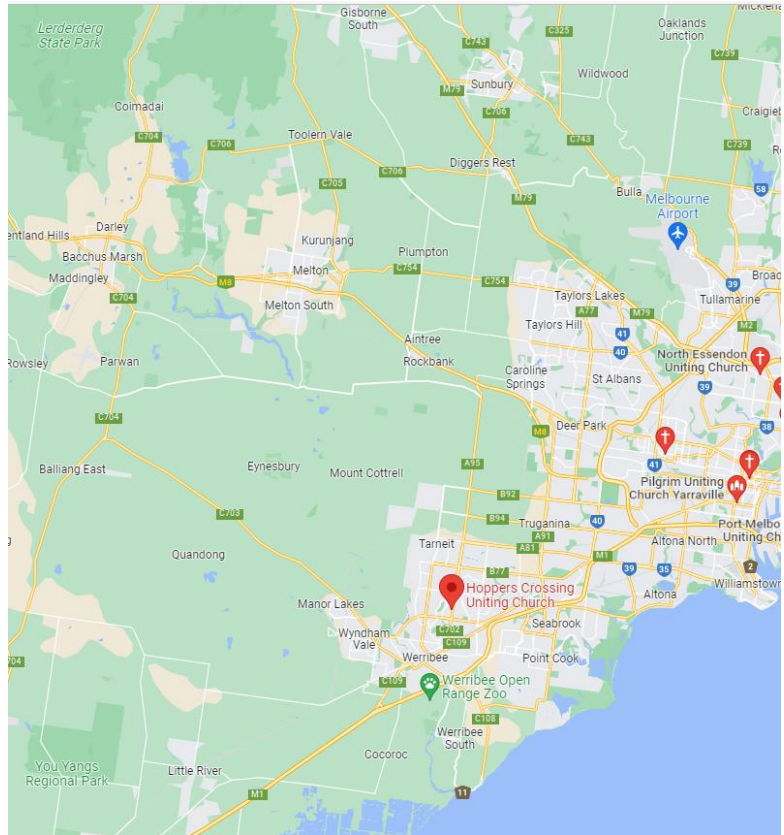
Airport West,
Ascot Vale (0.6),
Broadmeadows Scots
(May 2022),
Brunswick,
Brunswick Indonesian
(Lay),
West Brunswick (Cook
Island) (Lay),
Coburg,
Craigieburn – Wallan,
Croxton (May 2022),
Darebin North West,
Essendon Samoan,
Essendon North,
Gladstone Park,
Glenroy – Pascoe Vale,
Greenvale,
Northcote,
Preston,
Preston Macedonian,
Strathmore,
Sunshine Mental Health,
PEG Chaplaincy,
Aiken College.



Region Two: (Ranges, Brimbank & Wyndham Shire)

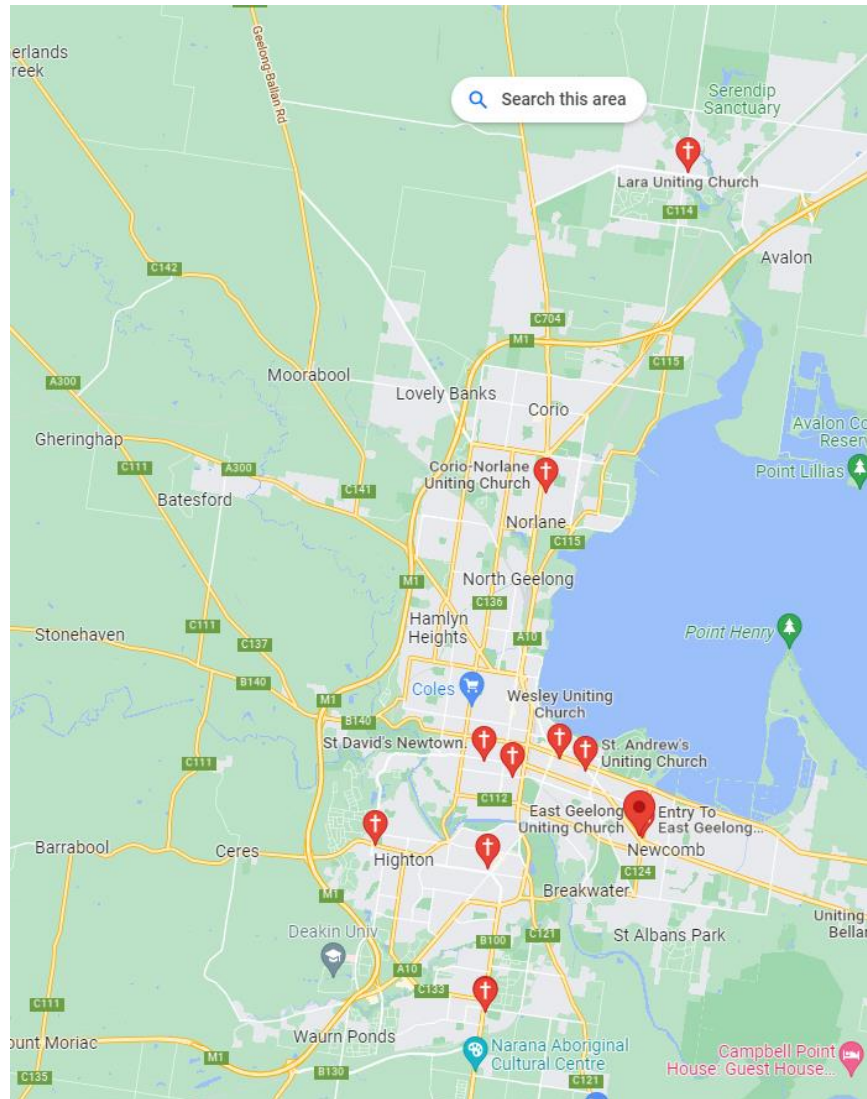
Two Regions were originally considered: Brimbank – Western Highway; Williamstown - Altona - Wyndham. However, looking at the number of part-time placements across the regions, it is not sustainable in the long term as two regions, hence 1 region is recommended.

Altona Meadows - Laverton, **Fijian** (Vacant),
Altona Trinity (0.5),
Footscray – **Vietnamese -Sudanese**,
Hoppers Crossing **Samoan- Tongan**,
Keilor **Samoan**,
Lancefield-Mt. Macedon (0.5),
Melton **Tongan Sudanese**,
Williamstown – Electra Street,
Williamstown St. Stephens (0.6),
Yarraville,
Seddon (Vacant),
St. Albans **Filipino** -Sydenham
Filipino - Caroline Springs, Sunshine -
Samoan (Vacancy), Sunbury,
Werribee Crossroads,
Bacchus Marsh – Pentland Hills,
Macedon Ranges Partnership (1.5)
(Gisborne – Kyneton – Romsey-
Riddells Creek - Woodend (Closing
Worship) -Tylden - Northern
Congregation: Barfold – Metcalf -
Mia-Mia - Sutton Grange);



Region Three: Greater Geelong this region has already set up a quarterly steering group that is working together. They strongly self-identify with this region.

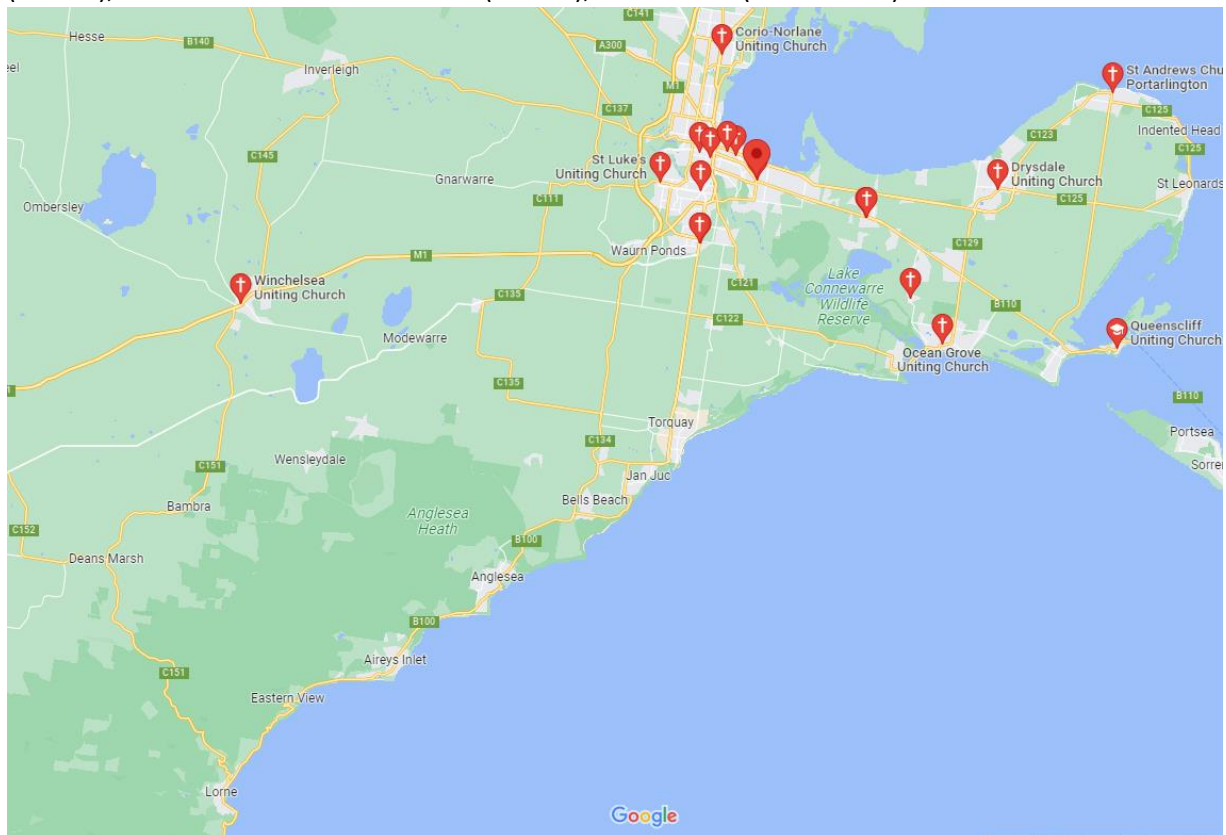
Belmont,
Lara **Samoan** – Corio-
Norlane (Vacant),
St. Alban's – St. Andrew's
(Vacant),
East Geelong,
Geelong Wesley
Grovedale,
Highton St. Luke's
Multicultural,
Newtown St Davids,
Newtown Nobel Street
Pacific Islander (0.6
Vacant),
Western Heights,
**Armstrong Creek Faith
Community,**
**Barwon Health
Chaplaincy,**
Uniting Faith & Families,
Age-Well Chaplain,
Narana Cultural Centre,
Geelong College.



Region Four: Bellarine-Surf Coast

This was originally two regions, but it was thought by presbytery because of the number of part-time placements that it should be one region.

Anglesea (Lay), Bellarine: Drysdale – Portarlington- St. Leonard’s, Leopold, Lorne (0.5 Vacant), Queenscliff - Point Lonsdale, Surf Coast: Torquay – Bellbrae – Ayres Inlet, Moriac – Barrabool (Vacant), Barwon Heads – Ocean Grove (Vacant), Winchelsea (0.25 Vacant)



Region Group Tasks:

Congregational members will join their proposed regional group.

- 1: Mapping: Please note, google maps does not list all the UCA congregations and when you zoom out some are lost. Therefore, you will need to draw in the congregations that are not currently represented on the map. Including arrows to any off the map. Make a note of congregations already clustered with a line.
- 2: Discuss the reality “That the current congregational structure is not viable. Congregations are going to have to work together.” Who are the congregations close to you?
3. Discussion: How do you see this region working together? *As a physical area? Ministry and Mission? Are there congregations that you would identify as of being of long -term importance? Which congregations might be IT Hubs for the region? Which building might act as an event Hub for the region (ie. IT and catering)? Are there growth corridors in your region? Is there anywhere in your region where a church should be planted? What oversight and accountability needs to be put in place for regions? within regions?*