



BATHURST
DIOCESE
Anglican Church of Australia



PARISH PROFILE
COWRA



ABOUT US

The Parish of Cowra is located in the Central West of NSW in the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst, with worshipping Christian communities at:

Cowra and Morongla

The congregations are in the main, long-term residents of Cowra and district and long-term members of their churches. It is a predominantly elderly parish with a small number of younger adults and families. The members of the parish, though small in number, are active in supporting the parish and ensuring that there is a visible, committed and ongoing ministry.

OUR MISSION

In the power of the Holy Spirit to be fruitful branches of our Lord Jesus Christ the Vine.

OUR VISION

To build a biblically functioning community where:

- Preaching inspired by the Holy Spirit brings a God-focused direction to our lives;
- We gather in small groups to share our hearts on the deepest levels;
- We compassionately walk with each other through life's problems and pains;
- Everyone feels empowered to make a difference through their spiritual gifts and abilities;
- Prayer, worship and the sacraments are a joyful and spiritual priority;
- We share God-given resources with the poor; and
- Our church sets goals and takes risks to reach out to all people with the Gospel.

OUR NEED

We understand that our new priest will be a person of God's choosing and calling and we trust God in his grace to provide someone who will help us to share the Gospel with each other and with our community.

In our parish consultation, we identified some capabilities which we believe may assist our new priest to identify, articulate and help us implement programs to develop and share our faith.

These include a capacity to:

- Teach and preach from the Bible, communicating the message of the Gospel with knowledge and understanding;
- Lead us in worshipping in reverence and joy, using both traditional and contemporary service forms;
- Equip us with skills for ministry within our parish and beyond; and
- Support us as we try new things in response to change in the church and the community.

WHERE WE ARE

The parish is centred in Cowra, a town of 9800. The outlying villages have small populations and serve the surrounding rural areas. The town of Cowra is well-served in terms of educational and medical, dental and paramedical facilities and aged care facilities. Cowra has a long-standing commitment to world peace and holds a festival of international understanding each year. The town commemorates its World War Two heritage through the Japanese Gardens, displays at the Visitor Information Centre, and the precinct built around the former prisoner of war camp. The area is in Wiradjuri country and below the main bridge, the pylons are the site for a set of murals by Aboriginal artists.

For more information about Cowra and its surrounding areas, please visit <https://visitcowra.com.au/> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cowra>

ABOUT THE CHURCH

Adapting to change

Our churches, like all others, were significantly affected by COVID restrictions in 2020. Services were cancelled for three months and resumed on a fortnightly basis at the end of June, replacing four services a week with one a fortnight. Our priest-in-charge reduced his working days in response to a significant reduction in parish finances.

Many parish activities and events ceased for most of 2020. However, this has been a time of finding new ways to meet the challenge of worshipping and keeping in touch in different ways, and parish members, while grieving the loss of many familiar parts of their church life, have supported changes and adapted to the new realities imposed by the pandemic. The church has coped with further change at the end of 2020 with the retirement of both our priest-in-charge and our parish secretary.

Church leadership

Following the retirement of the Rev'd John Croudace, our Honorary Associate Priest, the Rev'd Rhonda Hunt agreed to act as priest in the parish and to preside at Holy Communion once a month. Three times a month we use *Praise, Prayer and Proclamation*. Clergy are supported by lay people in reading and occasional preaching. We have been greatly blessed by Rhonda's continuing ministry amongst us and by that of our Licensed Lay Minister, Mrs Phyllis Bryant. Phyllis serves alongside Rhonda and exercises a special ministry in leading us in prayer each week.



PARISH PROFILE

COWRA

Parish administration

Parish Council is active in the leadership and management of the parish and is ably led by the church wardens. Peter Jansen serves as Parish Office Assistant and efficiently supports the parish with high-level administrative and technology skills.



Peter Jansen (L) with Rector's Warden, Bruce Pietsch

Parish activities

In 2021 we have welcomed the cautious resumption of some of our activities and the continuation of others resumed in the second half of 2020.



Gentle exercise group, Monday Bible study and Tuesday Bible share group have continued.



We hope to resume our community Book Fair in May and to take part in the town's markets and in Seniors Week.

Serving the Community

Many parish members serve individually in a range of community service groups. The church supports our members of the Healing Rooms (Rhonda and Peter) and the Christian Education Committee which supports the Christian Educator at Cowra High School. Members of the parish have been faithful in providing Scripture in local primary schools over many years.

Joyce Reid, our Scripture Coordinator, committed to teaching the Gospel in schools for 42 years.



Parish Consultation

The Parish holds parish consultations where all members of the parish are invited to take part in a discussion process to reflect on church life and to plan for the future. With the relaxation of COVID restrictions the consultation process resumed on 14 February this year, reflecting on the changes made to parish life during 2020 and planning for 2021.

Four projects were proposed to Parish Council: To increase our interaction with community events; to avail ourselves of opportunities for increased communication with the community; to form a visiting team for pastoral visiting; and to form a prayer circle.

Opportunities...

In 2021 the parish is looking to new ways of:

- sharing our faith with the community outside the church and with other churches;
- engaging with young people and children;
- supporting those who have made occasional contact through baptisms, weddings and funerals;
- reinvigorating our prayer life as a parish; and
- exploring ways in which more parishioners can participate in services and activities.

... and challenges

We know that our challenges are God's way of helping us to be alive to his calling and to rely on the promise of his grace as we seek to understand and do his will in this place at this time.

- We are a small congregation in number with an average attendance at Sunday worship of 30.
- Many are now over seventy in age and with some health limitations and we must be mindful of supporting each other in what we can realistically plan to do.
- Our finances are limited and adequate for day-to-day requirements, but we are unable to support a full-time priest-in-charge. Our retiring priest worked part-time.

The church's physical resources



The church buildings in Cowra and Morongla are well-maintained, and parishioners take care of the building and garden maintenance, including the more onerous requirements for sanitising the buildings before use.

In Cowra, the former rectory is now rented by Anglicare and HomeStart for programs which support families.

The parish owns a four-bedroom rectory in Taragala Street and a smaller home adjacent to the church (Buchanan House). Both are currently rented.

Dick Brown, Gardener Extraordinaire, beside the recently completed Memorial Garden at St John's.

For further information or to submit an expression of interest in this great ministry opportunity contact the Right Reverend Mark Calder, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst:

Phone: **02 6331 1722** Email: **bishop@bathurstanglican.org.au**