

Communities

Community Engagement & Service Basics

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Reaching Out In Loving Service
Community Service Series vol 5



AnglicareWA™
FOR TODAY. FOR TOMORROW

**Anglican
Church**
Diocese of Perth



A man at an event recently took some strange delight in lecturing me on the inadequacies of the Church in general and traditional Churches in particular. Among his litany of misdoings he commented on how we were 'out of touch', 'wrapped up in status and privilege' and so 'completely middle class' that we had no hope of connecting with the most needy in our community. I was very restrained and listened politely. I may not have agreed with every opinion he had to express but knew enough to realise that there was no reasoning with someone in that kind of mood. I was terribly (and wrongly) tempted to ask when he was trading in the Audi he drove, but God is merciful and sometimes I can curb my tongue.



Sadly, that individual is not alone in his perception of the Church. Nor is he completely wrong in some of his observations about our connection to the community. I wish, though, he could stand still long enough to take in all that our people do. Our parishes, agencies and schools do remarkable work at all levels of society. I meet with Anglican communities weekly who want to expand the work they do in loving service. Most of us live out our calling to love as Christ loves us, with many and diverse expressions.

This resource is intended to help Anglicans who want to express that sacrificial love through service. To build on the work we already do for and with the community and so ensure that we live out that imperative to be Christians reaching out in loving service. It is specifically put together for parishes and other Anglican communities who want to consider this further.

In 2009 and 2010 Anglicare WA in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Perth assembled a number of resource documents in a Community Service series. This was as one part of the Mission Plan for the Diocese which offered a focus on 'Reaching Out in Loving Service'.

All of these resources are available for download from the Anglican Diocese of Perth website www.perth.anglican.org/anglicare. These documents offer a wide range of ideas and examples of the ways in which our Churches engage and serve. They are very rich in detail and inspiration.

The purpose of *Communities: Community Engagement and Service Basics* is to bring some of the salient ideas from all of these resources together along with the addition of new material. It is intended to be a 'ready reckoner' for parishes and schools who want to reflect on community service and engagement as Christ's people reaching out in love and service to others.

Yours in Christ
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October 2012

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Want to Know More?

Check the resources at the Anglican Diocese of Perth www.perth.anglican.org/anglicare or contact Church Partnerships mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au.

You Will Find

- ◇ Helping People in a Crisis – Emergency Relief
- ◇ Not Rocket Science: Making Community Links
- ◇ What's Old is New Again: Op Shop Ministry (revised)
- ◇ Anglicare - a Faith Inspired Organisation
- ◇ Anglicare - Why We Help
- ◇ Dealing with Difficult People Situations
- ◇ Death, Grief and Resurrection: A Retreat / Residential for Pastors
- ◇ This document - Communities: Community Engagement and Service Basics
- ◇ Anglicare Service Guide

Why We Help

Christian community service arises from the principle that Christians must actively participate in God's plan of salvation for the world. We see scripture as affirming the idea that God as the Creator brought the world into being out of love and desires to express that love to the Creation.

Humanity, as the pinnacle of that creative process, was made in the image of God and endowed with the capacity to express love in an unselfish way, to interact wisely with the environment and to pursue a right relationship with their Creator. Human sin and selfishness, however, damaged this harmonious order. As a result we live in a broken world in need of redemption.

The Christian story is that God continually reaches out to the beloved creation, especially humankind, in order to give healing, blessing and enhancement. The ultimate moment of redemption in this process was through the person of Jesus Christ. God's desire is to bring God's children into right relationships at all levels of their lives; firstly with God, then expressed within themselves, in their communities and at the societal level. This enables them to live as they were intended and to fulfil their potential and to uncover the image of God within them.

As Jesus put it about his own mission:

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10b)

Christian individuals, groups and organisations are to be part of this mission. For example, Anglicare WA as one Christian community service organisation, seeks to create opportunities where individuals, families and communities can explore ways in which this human potential can be unlocked and developed; where past hurts and issues might be healed and where injustice is addressed and corrected.

In Anglicare's policy document "Anglicare: A Faith Inspired Organisation" it is expressed this way:

Our aim is to work with people at all stages of the continuum. We serve where people are struggling to survive in the situations they encounter as individuals, households or communities. This echoes Jesus' meaning behind the parable about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Offering immediate help and constructive support with no other agenda than that of care for another human being (one of God's beloved).

We are not content to remain in that arena, however. We are also committed to assisting people to cope with the issues they encounter, to then build on their skills and opportunities and to then reach their potential as thriving members of our community. It is not enough to meet the crisis that people encounter. We want to go further and offer opportunities that allow people the chance to unlock their potential. To grow in capability and independence in order to thrive rather than just survive.

The motto Anglicare WA applies to all of our work is "From surviving, to coping, to building, to thriving."

This engages with that much larger agenda of working to assist others to find 'Life and Life abundantly' (John 10:10).

St Paul's writing develops this notion. In his letter to the Church at Rome, he reminds us of how the whole creation waits in anticipation for the fulfilment of God's plan, where all live in harmony with their God and with each other.

Christians are called to work with God in fulfilling this promise – a promise which is both a here and now challenge, as well as a future event. This challenge is more than an individual's responsibility. It exists at the heart of our responses to God as a community of faith.

A ministry of social justice and care, of developing strong relationships and communities, of advocating for the other and caring for the vulnerable, cannot be ignored or neglected by Christian

individuals or organisations. It is an imperative grounded in Scripture and expressed by Jesus in his ministry.

Christians are called to emulate Jesus in their own lives and in the structures of the Church.

Special mention needs to be made of the most vulnerable and needy in our community. There is a strong theme in the Bible which relates to this group. They are referred to as the "*anawim*". It is a concept which runs through the Hebrew Scriptures, into the theology of Jesus' day and is reshaped and reinterpreted by Jesus in his teaching (seen most clearly in the Beatitudes).

Biblical scholars describe the meaning of *anawim* in many different ways, but they generally agree that it covers those who are the needy and vulnerable - those who know what it means to depend on God's mercy day by day. The *anawim* are the 'Little Ones' of our community.

Anawim is a theme often used by the Hebrew Prophets. For example: Isaiah in the famous 61:1-2, quoted by Jesus in Luke and developed by him in his teachings and ministry. The people of God are exhorted to care for the *anawim* as God does - with an abiding passion and profound compassion.

"The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed (anawim), to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORDS' favour."

Essentially this deep theme in scripture identifies the vulnerable and needy, those who are 'at risk', society's "little ones", as those for whom God has a special predilection. God is kindly disposed to them, and calls on God's people to respond accordingly.

These are also the people who have the ability to teach profound spiritual values to the comfortable. In Scripture, the *anawim* are those who can learn from the experience of utter dependence on God.

The presence of the vulnerable in any community also raises the possibility of mutuality of conversion in other ways. The *anawim* awaken our conscience and stir us to acts of compassion. In this interaction we receive a gift - the gift of seeing, knowing, and loving Christ in a renewed way. And the *anawim* bring with them deep insights and wisdom that can transform those who work along side them.

When we respond to the need of God's *anawim* and advocate for change along side them, we stand firmly in the tradition of the prophets and in obedience to Christ's call to reveal the reign (kingdom) of God in our day and context. We continue the work of the Church throughout the ages.

A ministry of social development and justice is an essential calling for those who seek to walk faithfully as a disciple in the footsteps of Jesus. Such a ministry is to encompass far more than only acts of charity or goodwill. It is also clear that words of faith, without deeds, diminish Christian discipleship.

The warrant for our work as Christian individuals and agencies is grounded in the life and ministry of Jesus himself. Jesus who offered wholeness of life, healed the sick, welcomed the rejected and outcast, and dined with those who were despised - that is - the *anawim* beloved by God.

For Reflection

What makes sense to you in this reflection on 'Why We Help'?

What do you disagree with? Find difficult to understand?

How closely do you think this describes your parish's theology and practice when it comes to service to people outside of your parish?

What could you add or subtract to make this more your explanation about why you serve?

Meeting the Aboriginal Community

A to Z Tips on getting to know the Aboriginal Community near you

Anglican Churches, schools and organisations engage with many diverse groups in their localities and areas of ministry. In this overview, Josey Hansen from Anglicare WA kindly shares some of her insights into her community. She offers them with the hope that this will foster greater understanding and bolster the capacity of Anglicans in their engagement with local Aboriginal people.

This is only a broad overview of some principles and insights concerning Aboriginal people. The best way to discover more, as with every human interaction, is to meet, journey together and so get to know each other better.

A to Z TIPS

- A. Culture, Family and History are at the centre of our life.
- B. Culture is an intricate part of our identity - our past, present and future. Identifying who we are, where we come from and where we want to go.
- C. Values and beliefs are part of our 'cultural terms of reference'.
- D. One shoe doesn't fit all – we, like the non-Aboriginal people, have culturally diverse backgrounds.
- E. Kinship is the framework by which we are guided to maintain our cultural obligations.
- F. We have our own status within our family.
- G. Within our framework, Elders take their position based on age, wisdom and knowledge. Their Eldership comes with "certain" status recognised and acknowledged within their own kinship system. They are significant cultural advisors.
- H. Specific codes of behaviour are demanded of every kinship relationship and we know how to act towards each other because of our system. For example a man is accountable for the behaviour of all of his 'sisters' in the clan. A father has to teach his sons to hunt and guide them through initiation and lore in some communities. Mother-in-law and son-in-law do not speak in some families.
- I. Family, kinship and cultural observances are our main priority.
- J. Our kinship system also determines who can and cannot marry.
- K. Kinship ensures that potential conflicts are controlled, obligations are kept and that we are securely related in the group.
- L. We all have cultural obligations and cultural supports provided by the kinship system.
- M. Our communities have many diverse kinship system patterns and experiences which are a dynamic relationship changing in different times and places. Individuals may identify with kinship in a different way with each family having their own way of living together. Aboriginality forms a common linkage between our diverse ways of living.
- N. We know where we sit in relationship to everyone else in the community as well as their relationship to outsiders.
- O. Our community is regarded as family therefore we have many mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and children.
- P. Material wealth is not held up as an ideal but rather as a resource to be shared.
- Q. Our Ceremonies can act as a form of "social glue".

- R. Our ceremonies must be honoured & respected as it is our cultural obligation to attend.
- S. Language is associated with our cultural values & considered central to our identity.
- T. Direct eye contact is considered confrontational & offensive.
- U. Silence is important to our communication & learning. Silence may indicate approval or disapproval.
- V. The Aboriginal grapevine is significant – word of mouth is a good way to get ideas and news around our community.
- W. “Aboriginal or Islander time” can be different from “Clock time”.
- X. Men tend to “Men’s Business” - Women tend to Women’s Business.
- Y. “Shame” - explains cultural distance. Sometimes we might inadvertently say something culturally inappropriate in a conversation with an Aboriginal person. As Culture is so important, and because Aboriginal people want to show respect to the person they are talking to, they may become very quiet or respond with the word “Shame”. This is a way of distancing oneself from the inappropriate direction the conversation is heading.
- Z. It is more culturally appropriate for our mob to engage once trust, rapport, respect and confidence have been gained. This is very important to Aboriginal people. If a person invites you to walk in their Country then that person is responsible for you and your walk. This means that they take responsibility for the consequences of what you do, your actions and behaviour, appropriate and inappropriate. Obviously we can only do that with people we have come to know and trust.

Used with the permission of Josey Hansen. Developed for Yarning About Proper Ways.



Welcome to Country or the Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

These are two aspects of a common desire to treat Aboriginal people and their cultural / spiritual ties to Country with respect.

They can take place before a meeting, an event, worship and other gatherings and are offered by way of mutual respect between the traditional custodians of the Land and others who have gathered there.

A Welcome to Country

Is offered by an Aboriginal Elder (that is someone senior in the Aboriginal Community) on behalf of the local people to everyone gathered.

An Acknowledgement

Is made by someone on behalf of the group by way of showing respect to Aboriginal Elders, past and present.

Welcomes and acknowledgements demonstrate support and respect for important cultural protocols and are also a way of educating visitors about Aboriginal culture. They can function as an important beginning point for cultural exchange and the growth of mutual understanding and respect.

Ideally these should be a key aspect of any event and involve local Aboriginal Elders in the planning and the event itself.

Welcome to Country Ceremonies

A formal 'Welcome to Country' ceremony by traditional owners of country explicitly shows respect for local Aboriginal cultures and is an important indicator of a desire to work closely and co-operatively with Aboriginal communities.

It's important to ask the appropriate local Elder to provide a Welcome to Country. That is, they need to be the Elder from that country who has the appropriate standing in the local Aboriginal community.

On occasions, a ceremony can involve all or any of the following:

- A welcome message in the traditional language, together with a translation into English;
- A performance of traditional dancing, song and music together with an interpretation;
- A Smoking, or other traditional event, which may be important for the subsequent smooth running and impact of the event. A smoking ceremony may be deemed appropriate in situations where the venue for an event holds negative cultural or historical connotations for local Aboriginal populations and is a way of 'healing' and 'making things right' for a new era or a new use.

Responding to a Welcome to Country ceremony

It is appropriate for the speaker immediately following a Welcome to Country ceremony to respond on behalf of the event organisers. This response normally includes:

- An acknowledgement and thanks for the person or people conducting the ceremony, mentioning their name(s);
- The group(s) of people who are generally acknowledged as the Traditional Owners should be acknowledged by name;
- A recognition of Traditional Ownership and appreciation for permission to meet on traditional country.

If the respondent is an Aboriginal person from another area, that person may choose to respond in their own language and perhaps deliver a message on behalf of their group.

A response might be worded as follows:

'On behalf of the (insert organizers), I respectfully acknowledge the [insert name of group] Traditional Owners, both those who have walked this land in days past, and those with us today. We are meeting today on your country and we thank you for welcoming us and showing us a little of your culture. It is a privilege to be standing here and to know that we have your support in the business we are here to undertake.'

Following this formal response, it is customary for subsequent speakers to also respond and acknowledge Traditional Ownership.

Acknowledgements of Traditional Ownership / Custodians

Many other smaller events and meetings will not require a formal welcome ceremony. Or there may be occasions where it is not possible to arrange for a formal welcome to country due to unforeseen circumstances including cultural obligations.

This is when an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians of the local Country is very appropriate. Once again it shows respect for Traditional protocols and signifies a commitment to work in an inclusive and culturally appropriate manner.

An acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership may be undertaken by any participant, including non-Aboriginal people, and should take place alongside the opening prayer as the one of the first items in opening the meeting or gathering.

Anglicare WA has negotiated the wording of an acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership which is used in places where Noongar people are the Traditional Custodians.

This provides a wording in Noongar language and a translation as follows:

'Ng-arla kar-dich Noong-ar mort kay-en kar-dak nid-jar bood-jar'

This means 'We acknowledge Noongar people as the original custodians of this land.'

A similar process of negotiating the language, wording and form of an acknowledgement should be followed in other areas of the State. Traditional Owners should always be consulted in this process.

WE ARE PROUD TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE

Noongar

PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THESE LANDS AND WATERS

ANTaR
Antar Association for Racial Tolerance and Reconciliation
www.antar.org.au

Sea of Hands

ANTAR ACKNOWLEDGES THERE ARE ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS OF NOONGAR (NYUNGAR, NYOONGAR, NYOONGAH, NYUNGAH, NYUGAH, YUNGA), HOWEVER NOONGAR HAS BEEN USED AS AN INCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE NOONGAR SOCIETIES.

These plaques are available from the Anglican Advocacy Commission

(08) 9286 0270

Funerals

Funerals in the Aboriginal community are very serious affairs. They generally involve a lot of people, travel and gatherings before and after the actual funeral itself. Aboriginal people see themselves as part of a large network, and these relationships become very important when one member dies. There are obligations and customary expectations which are determined by who you are in relation to the deceased and their immediate family.

As Anglican Churches we can offer important pastoral care at these times of mourning and gathering. Here are some tips for supporting Aboriginal people when a funeral is being held in your Church.

- **Children** At a funeral for an Aboriginal person the involvement of children is an essential element. They are never excluded from the process. Children are often involved in the funeral proceedings such as forming a guard of honour before the service and burial ceremony. They are part of the team who places the sand on their loved one's coffin and are involved in the placement of ornaments, floral arrangements and wreaths and so on.
- **Speaking about the Deceased** When people gather to farewell a loved one there are some restrictions about the freedom different people have to yarn about the person who has died. It is important to be sensitive as you meet different relatives and friends as some people will feel more freedom to discuss the deceased than others
- **Proper Relationships** When you are involved in an Aboriginal funeral it is important to ask someone you know from their community before you go on this journey. They may walk with you or point you in the direction of someone who will. As with every encounter with this community it's important to let people know where you fit in the bigger picture and to find the right person in their community to work with you. It is helpful to discuss the normal arrangements with a senior person from the family, concerning flowers, service books and so on. There will be a significant person who will be the representative at discussions about organisation for the funeral.
- **A Visit** If the deceased person resided in your community it would be an excellent idea to visit the grieving family. If you do, make sure that you take something with you such as tea, coffee, biscuits, cake, sugar or milk. Never go empty handed.
- **Sound** Funerals can be large, especially in country towns and even more so if it's an Elder's funeral. If it is possible to have speakers for outside of the Church building it is a great help as there is often an overflow of people. The same can be said for the burial at the cemetery.
- **Hospitality** Our Churches are generally struggling with finances. But any offer of hospitality is always gratefully received in these situations. A gift of the cost of the minister's services, flowers for the church, something to contribute to the food for after the service - anything like that is an important offering to people who are often struggling financially and who face a large number of funerals each year.
- **A 'Wake'** Community is at the heart of such gatherings. Being able to meet after the funeral is crucial for people but it has become increasingly difficult for Aboriginal communities to find suitable venues that are affordable. If you have a Church hall and are interested in making it available for this purpose it would be an invaluable gift to grieving families.

In Regional and Remote Areas

Aboriginal communities vary greatly around our State. In regional areas there are often important protocols to observe if visitors want to be respectful of the culture and traditions of Aboriginal people. For example, the Yamatji Marpla Aboriginal Corporation, which is the native title representative body for the Pilbara and Murchison-Gascoyne regions, has produced a Cultural Protocol Guide which shares some basic tips about how to engage Aboriginal people in those rural and remote areas. The information below is based on this guide.

Once again, it is important to realise that (like every community) each Aboriginal gathering and community have specific expectations about how to show respect and work together. The best way is always to find a local contact person and ask about how to go about things in a proper way.

Visiting / Going on Country

Speaking for Country

Different people have cultural responsibilities over different parts of country. When talking about going onto country, ask to make sure you know the right person to speak to about that part of the land.

If you are going out on country for a meeting or visit, always ask where you can and can't go. If you don't ask, you could step somewhere that could get you into trouble. If you are out on a trip or going for a swim, always let someone know where you are going. This is for your own safety and to make sure you don't disturb important sites and places.

IMPORTANT

- Don't take anything off the country, including rocks and shells.
- If you are doing anything that might disturb the country (e.g. breaking tree branches to make a campfire) make sure you ask first.
- If you pick something up, make sure you put it back where you got it from.

Photographs

- As a general courtesy, always ask people's permission before taking photographs. One way of doing this is to ask for people join you in another area if they would like to be part of a photo.
- If you intend to use a photograph in a publication, online or for any public purpose, you need to seek permission from the people involved. This includes images of country (landscapes) or photos of art, carvings and artefacts. These can be culturally sensitive and also require permissions.

NOTE: Photographs, film and voice recordings of deceased persons can cause great distress. For this reason, it is important to get permission for each publication, even if permissions for a photograph may have been given in the past.

Appropriate Clothing:

Women should avoid tight or revealing clothing. Long trousers or skirts that fall below the knee are generally fine.

Avoidance Relationships

Different members of Aboriginal communities may not be able to speak or look directly at one another out of a deep respect for their cultural relationship. For example, some people may not be able to sit together at a meeting, go on a trip together or even share the same car. It is always useful to speak with your local contact person to find the best way to facilitate these relationships.

Community Meetings

Preparing for Meetings

Ask your local contact person or meeting leader if there are any sensitivities to be aware of, including topics, questions or any names that are not OK to say.

If You are Providing Food

During a mourning period some people will not eat certain foods like red meat, kangaroo meat or fish. Participants at various gatherings might have certain medical conditions such as diabetes that affect their diet. People may refuse food for these reasons, so it's good to ask beforehand what people can and can't eat. Be sure to have a variety of food available.

Sorry Business and Law Business

People will often have to travel several days for Sorry Business (funerals) and Law Business (cultural ceremonies). Some cultures will have specific places they will travel to for these gatherings. It is important not to disturb people when they are at these places. Always avoid planning meetings during these times and be prepared for meetings to be cancelled due to these reasons.

At Meetings

- If you are addressing a meeting, be straightforward in your presentation and give clear answers to questions.
- Be aware that yes/nodding or silence doesn't always mean agreement.
- To make sure you have the right understanding of the meeting outcomes, check with your local contact person. It may be necessary for them to speak with attendees after the meeting, to get feedback and responses.

Decision Making

Traditional decision making can take time. It might take several weeks for people to come to the right decision on important issues. Do make sure you plan for decision-making time in your schedule. Rushing decisions or putting pressure on people can result in uncertainty and will waste time in the long run.

After a meeting, ask your local contact person how they felt the meeting went and if there was anything you could do differently next time.

When in doubt, ask!

Aboriginal people will want to help you in the best way possible. Sometimes an Elder or even someone of a similar age to you may sit down next to you and quietly advise you. They are trying to help and guide you on appropriate conduct. Local contact persons are happy to be mentors and educators for non-Aboriginal people visiting or attending meetings. If you have any questions, they are the people to check with.



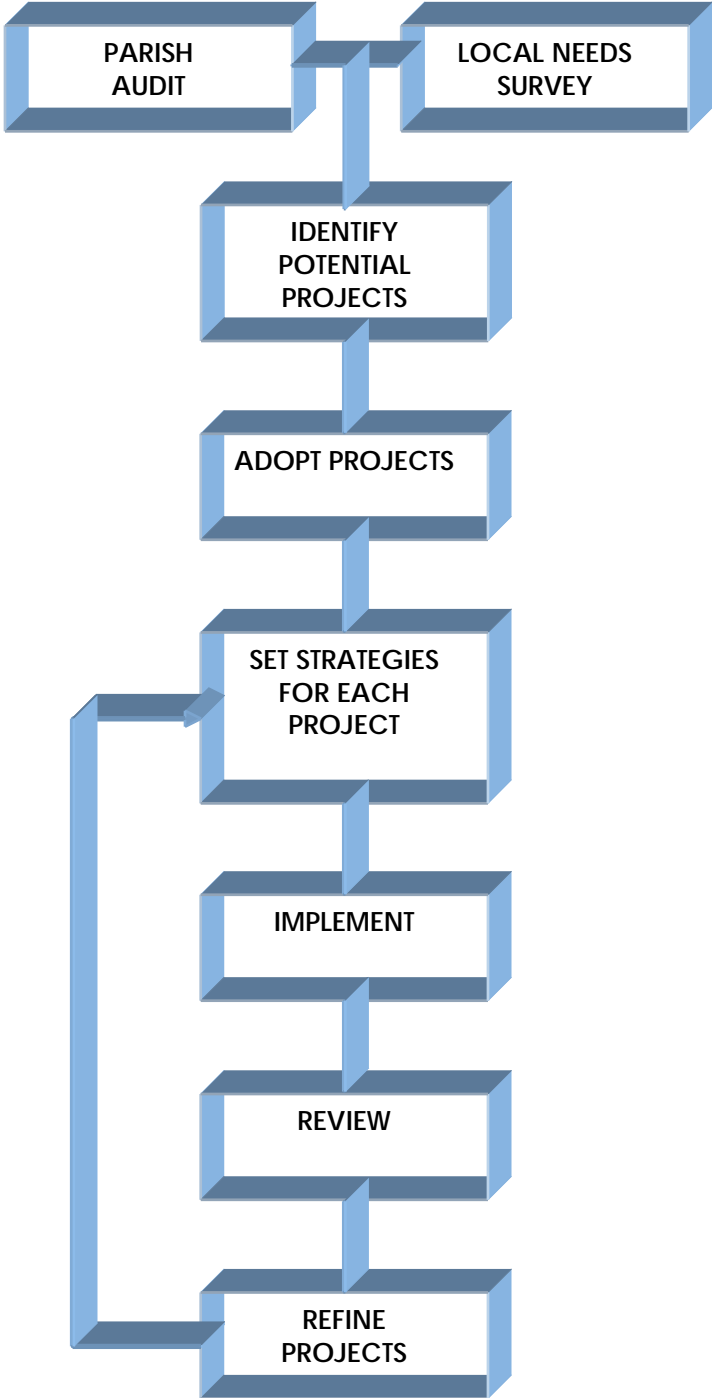
With thanks to the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation

Community Engagement Basics

A simple process for looking at community service and engagement projects

A simple process for developing community projects is described over the next few pages. We've avoided using too many words and details in the hope that each parish that takes up this task will develop things in their own way and style. The whole point of local action is that it arises from local context and addresses needs in a way most suited to that area.

Here's the outline of a process for developing local initiatives from a parish base.



First Steps

There are two parts to the first step in this process. The Parish Audit and a Local Needs Survey. These are the crucial building blocks for everything else that follows. The following discusses the first step.

CRUCIAL FIRST STEPS:

The Parish Audit and a Local Needs Survey

PARISH AUDIT

This is a very important process. It is designed to look at what the parish has to draw on to continue in its mission of service to the community.

What is listed in this audit is all of the individuals, groups, programs, physical resources and existing relationships the parish has with the local community.

The question:

“What resources do we have?”

LIST:

- ◇ Existing ministries which serve the community.
- ◇ Skills, capacities, gifts and interests of people in the congregation.
- ◇ Existing parish programs which might contribute to service in the community.
- ◇ Existing community connections: individuals and groups. Especially parishioners who are connected to / or knowledgeable about service in the community (eg local politician, social worker, nurse).
- ◇ Physical resources: buildings, other resources.

PARISH
AUDIT

LOCAL NEEDS
SURVEY

IDENTIFY
POTENTIAL
PROJECTS

ADOPT PROJECTS

SET STRATEGIES
FOR EACH
PROJECT

IMPLEMENT

REVIEW

REFINE
PROJECTS

LOCAL NEEDS SURVEY

This process is designed to look at what gaps there are in your locality. It is counterproductive to assume that you know what people want or need in your local community. You could waste a lot of time and effort working on a project that doesn't offer what is needed.

It is also crucial to determine what is already on offer to avoid doubling up and to find out where the gaps are. Conversations with other Churches and groups can lead to cooperative efforts and great outcomes.

What are listed in here are the needs and wants that people identify as gaps in your local area. Key to this process is CONSULTATION.

The questions:

“How are need being met already?” and
“What are the unmet needs in our area?”

WHO TO CONSULT:

- ◇ Your own people
- ◇ Focus Groups
- ◇ People active in the community
- ◇ Local service providers
- ◇ Public forum
- ◇ Publications

A. MAKING A PARISH AUDIT

This is a very important process. It is designed to look at what the parish has to draw on to embark on the next stage of its mission of service in the community.

The question before us: "What resources do we have?"

What is listed in this audit is all of the individuals, groups, programs, physical resources and existing relationships the parish has with the local community.

LIST:

◇ Existing ministries which serve the community.

What is outlined in this section are those ministries we offer which provide service and community support to people outside of our parish. That is, if we have a parish pantry that provides meals for sick parishioners it does not appear here. If, however, that same program is used for parishioners and others from the neighbourhood who come to our attention, then that constitutes a ministry which serves others from the community.

This is an important list to make.

- It helps provide a more complete picture of our activity in this area.
- It highlights obvious gaps in what we do as a Church.
- What is most helpful in this process is that we can reflect on whether it would be better to develop an existing ministry (grow it, expand coverage, get better resources and make partnerships) rather than create a project from scratch.

◇ Skills, gifts, capacities and interests of people in the congregation/parish.

In this section, ask people to identify their own and others skills, gifts, capacities and interests. This can be seen as a process of 'discerning the body of Christ' in a particular community. It may be that these skills etc are evident and much in use but they can also be hidden or unrecognized. The audit process can be a good time to encourage people to imagine how their skills etc can be used differently or can be further enhanced through further learning and a new engagement.

Our people are our greatest asset. We have many parishioners who are connected to or knowledgeable about service in the community. Good people to look for in your congregation are local politicians, social and community workers, nurses, all of those people who work in the area of community need and service.

Also helpful are those parishioners wise in the ways of your neighbourhood. Elders if you like. People who are part of the fabric of your locality, and who play a big part in your suburb, town, or council.

Again, here is a perfect starting point when we make connections to other groups who serve in our community and who might become our partners in this important calling.

◇ Parish programs which might contribute to service in the community.

In this section we list those ministries in our Church which do not yet have a direct mandate to serve in the local area but which might be:

- ◇ Expanded to meet the needs of others outside of our parish;
- ◇ Used as a partner to any new projects we develop (see below for an example); or
- ◇ Which could provide resources to any new project (eg Ladies Guild providing 'start up resources' through fundraising efforts).

For example, if the project is to make connection to socially isolated people the following parish ministries could be used to get in touch with, or supply activities for them.

- ◇ *Op Shop (a place where people come through all of the time);*
- ◇ *'Shut in visiting': a perfect place to find people who could do with some social networks and activity.*
- ◇ *Wednesday Coffee Shop (meet people needing this support and a place to offer them contacts with others);*
- ◇ *Craft Group (a perfect place to direct people looking for contacts with others)*

◇ **Physical resources.**

These include our buildings, finances, access to material resources (eg people willing to donate goods and services to our projects) and so on.

Some parishes have valuable unused or underutilised space. A simple community initiative would be to search out a community group with slender funding and offer that space free or at cost. Then it's possible to build further projects and links with that group to create a significant outreach to the local area. This will mean learning to share our space with others for sake of mission.

When considering this issue, however, it's important to pay attention to the ways in which use of your centre may affect existing centre tenants.

◇ **Existing community connections.**

Every Church exists in a community network. The local ministers group, the various groups that use our facilities, partnerships the parish already has in place. The politician who attended our last commissioning and the community service agency that runs their playgroups from the hall.

Here is an invaluable network of individuals and groups that can be contacted for advice, consultation, resources, referral and perhaps even partnership.

B. MAKING A LOCAL NEEDS SURVEY

This process is designed to look at what gaps there are in your locality. It is counterproductive assume that you know what people want or need in your local community. You could waste a lot of time and effort working on a project that doesn't offer what is needed. Therefore an important part of this process is to find out what is already happening in the community – what services are already provided to meet the needs of people. By doing this you achieve several things – you put a human face on your parish by going to ask such a question; you build up a resource list of information which could be useful in referral or in promoting your new project; and you find out what the gaps in services are can begin to imagine how to respond.

The questions before us:

"How are needs already met in the community" and
 "What are the unmet needs in our area?"

What is listed in here is a list of existing services in the area and a list of the needs and wants that people identify as gaps in your local area.

What is key in this process is CONSULTATION both to find out what is already happening and what is not happening which gives us an idea about how we can engage in new and creative ways.

WHO CAN WE CONSULT?

◇ **Your own people**

It is always good to remember that we as the Church are not outside of the community. Rather we help to make it up! Our people belong to groups outside of Church, have children at the local school, hold office in various community organisations and interact with their neighbours all of the time.

When considering local needs it is always helpful to consult your own people on two topics:

- a. Their own ideas about what would be helpful in their area. This has the added benefit of raising your people's awareness of what the Church is doing in this area of loving service, and increasing their commitment to projects adopted by the parish. and
- b. Ask them to do some research with people they are connected to locally. Ask them to check with their clubs, neighbours, other parents at school, and so on about what they would like to see in their community. This also has the benefit of creating a network of possible volunteers or participants in any future project.

◇ **Focus Groups**

Focus groups are used by a range of professions whose task is discern community attitudes towards a broad spectrum of issues. They are easy to form, and provide a bonus – the leave you with a network of people who may be interested in being involved in a project either as a participant or volunteer.

The best way to create focus groups is to use your existing networks. For instance; if you think a project engaging young parents might be of value, find the times when these sorts of people gather at your Parish Centre. These might be:

- ◇ The playgroup;
- ◇ The Sunday evening family service;
- ◇ Parents waiting to pick their children up from dance classes;
- ◇ Parents of children in the Sunday school.

Be creative about when you meet with people you think might be able to help in this way. For instance, give your people a sheet with the questions on it and ask them to survey others when they meet at their sporting and social gatherings. When one of your retirees goes to bowls – why not ask some questions over tea or at the bar afterwards, that sort of thing.

Most people are willing to help – especially if there is no special effort to attend a meeting. If they are already there – it is easy to ask them for 20 minutes of their time and find out what they think about a particular issue.

Once you gather these people together the task is to spend a short and focused time looking at a series of specific questions. It's important to keep the questions mostly the same throughout discussions with each focus group so that you will have standard information to compare at the end of the process.

Questions in focus groups can be very general or quite specific – depending on the detail you require. You can even meet with a focus group more than once – in order to get them to help you refine the project to meet the needs they have identified.

For example:

- ◇ Focus Group: Parents of primary school aged children
- ◇ Meeting 1:
 - Question 1: "What community activity would help you be better parents?"
 - Question 2: "What do you think other parents in our local area would want?"
 - Response from the group: "Some presentations on managing children's behaviour."

- ◇ Meeting 2:
 - Question 1: "What topics would be useful to parents of young children in our area?"
 - Question 2: "When should these workshops be held?"
 - Question 3: "Would you come to a workshop like this?"
 - Question 4: "what sort of fee do you think would be manageable?" etc

Focus groups should be short, sharp and to the point, but conducted in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Results should be recorded and then collated for consideration by the working group.

◇ **People active in the community**

Your Shire president or CEO, or local council member, librarians, community activist, member of your Church who are involved in local issues, sporting club presidents and others all provide a rich source of local knowledge and perspectives on what your community might need.

Consulting and building links with these sorts of community leaders is also an invaluable step in terms of growing our parish presence in a locality, hopefully developing greater trust and cooperation, and letting others know that the Church is here and engaged in the life of our community.

◇ **Local service providers**

Most local areas have community workers involved in a wide range of services and activities. For instance the local shire or council, State government agencies such as the Department for Communities, local schools, along with a range of non-government community organisations, provide a range of services to our neighbourhoods.

As part of any local needs survey, a phone call, email or visit to anyone providing community service to your locality is invaluable. This is also a useful way to build links and partnerships with others reaching out to our community. Some of these people and agencies might become partners in your project.

◇ **Public forum**

Calling people together to discuss an issue is always a difficult task. If the agenda is a general conversation about what might be good to have in our neighbourhood it is often difficult to get people to attend. If it is over a contentious issue, feelings can run high and a meeting needs to be carefully managed. Still, if you need to quickly develop an understanding of community feeling on an issue this might be one avenue.

◇ **Publications**

There are a lot of studies and surveys available at your local library, council and also on the web. Depending on how much detail you need – you can check Census material to discern the demography of the people in your locality. Also – an approach to someone working in a particular area of concern (say youth) can give you access to specialist research and analysis.

◇ **Your ideas**

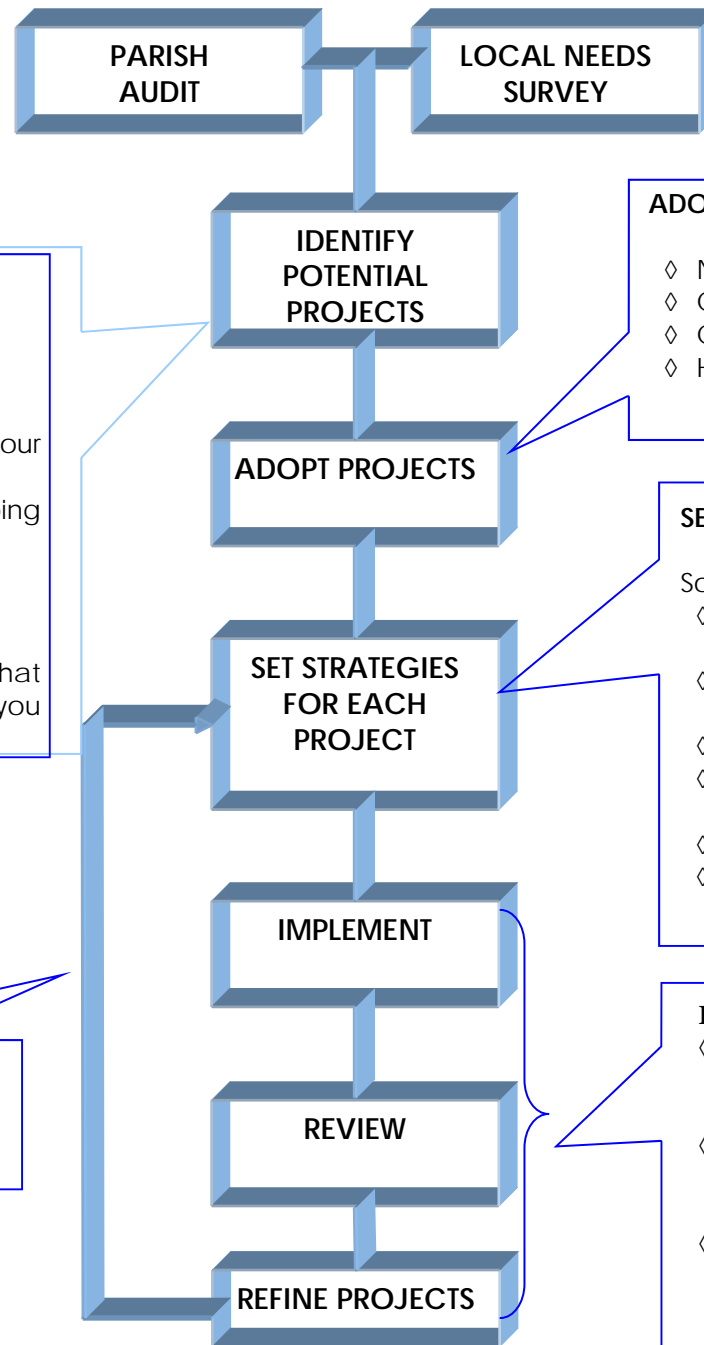
As we have said earlier in this resource, the best solutions and strategies are those developed by the people on the ground. Your ideas about how to reach people from your community are very important as they reflect your local knowledge and connections.

Final Steps

Once you have the building blocks of a community service and engagement plan you can move on to planning and developing specific programs. A summary of the process is below.

For more detailed information please go to www.perth.anglican.org/anglicare and open the link to 'Not Rocket Science' by Mark McCracken.

FINAL STEPS: Making Projects Happen



IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Some important questions to ask:

- ◇ Where is God calling us?
- ◇ Who should we consult about this?
- ◇ What are the important needs in our community?
- ◇ Can we build on what we are doing already?
- ◇ Which of these should we address?
- ◇ What is manageable and sustainable?

Use your **project ready reckoner** to lay out what resources etc are available to your parish as you reflect on what projects to take up.

ADOPT PROJECTS

- ◇ Need to be manageable and sustainable.
- ◇ Can be seen as a pilot or an experiment.
- ◇ Can choose more than one.
- ◇ How long will the project run for?

SET STRATEGIES FOR EACH PROJECT

Some issues to consider:

- ◇ Strategies are clear, step by step tasks to achieve the goals of the program.
- ◇ Set up a prayer team for each project to keep it supported over the next six months.
- ◇ Who will champion the project within the parish?
- ◇ Who will take responsibility for convening the project development group?
- ◇ Who will be our partners in this?
- ◇ How will you know if you achieve what you set out to do?

IMPLEMENT, REVIEW REFINE

- ◇ It's OK to start off small, or if you are uncertain of where this will lead. It's just important to start! See this as an experiment – a new venture in faithfulness.
- ◇ Set a review date before you launch the project. Review and refinement are essential parts of every exercise.
- ◇ Keep a good ongoing record of new ideas, attempts, successes and setbacks so that you can add these to the review and share them with others as they undertake similar projects.

Once you've reviewed your project feed these new insights back into your project to ensure ongoing improvements.

Building Partnerships

Anglicare WA

Anglicare WA is intent on developing significant partnerships with the Anglican Church, our local Church communities, the Dioceses in the Province of WA and Anglican schools and other organisations. Anglicare's commitment is clearly seen in the joint funding of the Church Partnerships program which has been operating since 2007.

There are many aspects to partnerships between Anglicare and other Anglican communities. Partnerships range from donations of money, volunteers and physical resources, to sponsorships by an Anglican community of a specific Anglicare program or service. There can be events hosted by Anglican Churches and Schools which support Anglicare, or provide a venue, or are held as a joint event to provide education and so on to people from the local area. Partnerships can involve hosting or working together in program at the local level. And often there are partnerships where Anglicare services are based at Anglican Churches and schools.

Partnerships like these offer a rich resource for Anglican Churches, schools and other organisations who want to reach out in loving service.

To explore partnership opportunities and ideas contact the Coordinator on (08) 9263 2124, 0403 368 248 or at mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au.

Other Anglican Services and Organisations

All of our Churches, schools and community service organisations welcome the opportunity to consider partnerships.

- Why not consider who else operates in your locality?
- Which Anglican organisations are already connected to you and which ones fit well with your mission plan?
- How might existing relationships be enhanced and developed to make your support for them more intentional?
- And how can you make new Anglican partnership so that your local service ministry can be more informed and enriched?

To explore these Anglican partnerships begin with the Diocesan Website www.perth.anglican.org.

Local Community Groups and Services

There are always a significant number of community and government services operating in your locality. Good places to find out about them are the local library and the shire or city council office.

- Why not attend or hold community service network gatherings and so meet others who are working in your local area?
- You can develop a resource list of all of the services available to people near you and keep it in your office and even in the foyer for people to access.
- Why not invite local service providers to speak to your people? With a view to discerning who could become partners with you in service?

Some Partnership Basics

Developing community partnerships is not always a straightforward process. Here are some tips that might be useful when Church, agency, school, Diocese interact. They come from a paper written by Mark McCracken on what we have learned from the Church Partnerships program in the Diocese of Perth.

- Relationships, Relationships, Relationships!
- It is Essential to Have a Translator Who is Bilingual
- Engage in a lot of Story Telling
- Education is Key
- The Three Amigos: Diocese, Parish / School and Agency
- Have a Clear Agreed Process
- Take It Slow and Steady
- The Power of Money
- Be Multi-Cultural
- Perspectives

◇ **Relationships, Relationships, Relationships!**

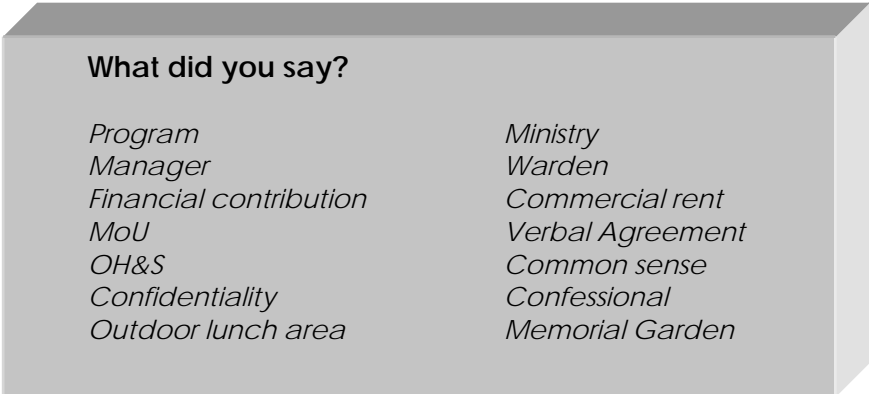
This is a blindingly obvious thing to say when talking about engagement and partnerships. And it needs to stay at the forefront of our intentions and planning when we work to bring people together to serve a common purpose. We often assume that relationships will grow and develop when we meet together yet experience tells us that this is not always a guaranteed outcome.

There are a lot of ways we can ensure that relationships are established, built up and maintained. A few of these are:

- Make time in meeting agendas for people to share something of their own story or thoughts on a particular topic;
- Attend to all of the stakeholders, remaining in close contact yourself and creating opportunities for them to meet up on a regular basis;
- Be mindful of those relationships which are strained or are headed that way and try some things to make the way smoother and communication clearer.
- Take the opportunity to celebrate at the drop of a hat. Every development, new agreement and milestone provide an ideal opportunity to bring people together, tell the story and grow relationships.

◇ **It is Essential to Have a Translator Who is Bilingual**

I am bilingual. I speak Church and Welfare (some say I also mangle Gibberish but that is a slander). Before priesthood I worked as a social worker in the area of community development and counselling. And I have served as priest for twenty years. This has been helpful indeed. It means that in negotiations between agency staff and parish leaders explanations can be offered that make communication clearer. We all use jargon and we make assumptions that words mean the same to others as to ourselves. This has often led to some misunderstanding between parish and agency.



Further – it has often been necessary to explain the concerns one party has in ways that make sense to the other. We bring a lot of assumptions to the table; about how things should be done, the procedures to be followed, the work others do and so on. Misunderstanding and misinformation makes our task so much harder.

◇ **Engage in a lot of Story Telling**

Sharing stories about how we got to where we are today (as individuals, groups and organisations) and also about the way others have dealt with specific issues in partnership is a powerful way to develop mutual understanding and goals. It also helps in the process of formulating a vision and a plan to address the issues before us.

◇ **Learning and Education is Key**

As with all human endeavour, education is so important when it comes to developing effective engagement and partnerships between Church groups and Anglicare organisations. Some useful ways to educate the various parties can be to:

- Talk about 'Why'. Why we help as Christians. Why Anglicare exists and operates as we do. Why all of this is important. Sue's presentation helps us here. Also a 'Why' statement from Anglicare WA can be found at the end of this presentation.
- Make presentations to the parish and other Church groups about the work and structure of Anglicare as a whole (an old style 'deputation').
- Offer workshops on the need or issue that we are working on - inviting Church, Anglicare and other specialists to contribute.
- Create or source written material which allows participants in an engagement or project to reflect more carefully on the issue. There are some examples at the end of this presentation.
- Keep a careful history of the project so that you can pass on the record of achievements and discoveries to those who come after you.
- Make presentations within working group meetings themselves (I have often done this before we discussed an issue that looked complex or sensitive).

◇ **The Three Amigos: Diocese, Parish / School and Agency**

In every partnership involving finance and property there should always be three players. That is:

- ◇ the Diocese,
- ◇ the parish or school, and
- ◇ the agency (such as Anglicare).

Putting these three stakeholders together from the very beginning of any project that involves significant expenditure, leases, and/or the use and development of property is a critical first step. It keeps the Diocese apprised of what partnerships are developing and makes various approval processes quick and smooth. It goes some way to ensuring that the best interests of all parties to the partnership are considered. And processes and decisions have a great deal of clarity.

This is a great strength for our approach in Perth. All agreements feature all three parties, as do all project and ongoing building management committees.

◇ **Have a Clear Agreed Process**

A great deal of time has been invested in determining an agreed process between Agency and the Diocese (and by extension shared with the Parish). We have discovered (to our cost) that even though the process can be laborious and seemingly bureaucratic – it is important to stick to a system.

Any significant agreement for us is built on three documents and the process hangs on their development:

- ◇ After initial discussions and a general agreement about the project *Letters of Intent* are exchanged;
- ◇ A *Memorandum of Understanding* is then developed and signed outlining the project, what we need to do to make it happen and the responsibilities of all the parties in the exercise; and then
- ◇ A final *Agreement* is signed. A lease, a contract, or a statement outlining the details of the use of the facilities and the nature of the partnership. That is, how we will manage things when everything is up and running.

Sometimes all of this can seem unnecessary and somewhat complicated. Especially 'among Christian friends'. But clear process has ensured that we have smoother negotiations, and less spectacular pratfalls.

◇ **Take It Slow and Steady**

There's an old adage drummed into community workers - "Community development takes a long time." Like all proverbial wisdom, this is a truth we ignore at our peril. Agencies are often under some time pressure when it comes to providing accommodation and infrastructure for their programs. Funding is often tight, tenders work on often ridiculous timelines, and answers can be slow in coming from government and other funders. This makes it difficult to plan a long way ahead, and to engage parishes with a great deal of certainty.

Yet it is important to take as much time as possible in discussion and discovery to ensure everyone is on the same track when it comes to these higher level partnerships. Even in cases where it looked like plain sailing, there have been setbacks to development of our projects because of misunderstandings, concerns about the future, mismatches in expectations, vision and capacities and so on.

All projects need time and space to mature at their own rate. The following are useful tasks to assist in this process:

- ◇ Nurture participants, i.e. don't assume everyone is a community development expert (even the social workers!);
- ◇ Engage in bridge building, make opportunities for agency staff and Church people to meet and greet;
- ◇ Remain in close personal contact with the stakeholders;
- ◇ Keep information flow high (do what I do best, keep talking); and
- ◇ Have regular 'executive' level meetings (i.e. between the leadership of each party) during negotiations and regularly after the partnership has begun.

◇ **The Power of Money**

I believe the Christian faith is about love and service. Faith and life itself. Yet as a human organisation we are at the mercy of many of the influences and concerns of the day. In many partnership conversations everyone has been in agreement when discussing the need to serve, to care for the vulnerable, to make opportunities for development and growth in the local area.

Things have often become unstuck when we moved into the area of money – which is surrounded by issues of control of resources, good stewardship, security and financial priorities. In other negotiations things became sticky when cash strapped parishes have want commercial rents from an agency that seemed to have lots of money. Yet from the agency's perspective the deal was to make a financial contribution to the life of the church from narrow margins.

*"No one would remember the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions –
he had money, too." Margaret Thatcher*

To carry out our calling parishes and agencies, and the Diocese itself, need to be wise managers of the financial resources they have. To ensure the best outcomes through astute expenditure. I have no doubt that this is what often motivates such misunderstandings. But it would be true to say that many pitfalls in partnership negotiations are around money. Care needs to be taken when it comes to discussions around financial issues.

◇ **Be Multi-Cultural**

'Corporate Cultures' refers to the culture of management which exists in a particular organisation. When dealing with the Diocese, an agency, and a parish or school, very distinct cultures of operation and management exist. Differences between these cultures can cause a clash when it comes to negotiating a partnership and the management of a project once it is underway.

Time and effort must be spent coaching those members of any partnership who are unsure of these sorts of requirements. To assist them in their attempts to manage and operate at a 'professional' standard.

◇ **Perspectives**

When approaching a prospective partnership it is critical to be careful about the assumptions we bring to negotiations, especially in regard to the vision / agenda that each group may hold.

It is easy to assume that everyone at the table will have the same breadth of vision about service and ministry. This is not always the case. Some negotiations have become strained because the parish found it difficult to embrace some of the agendas presented by the other parties. For want of a better description, they were being asked to take a global perspective whilst struggling to cope with very local needs and issues. In other cases State and Commonwealth agencies found it difficult to appreciate local concerns and so on.

*"All the world's mad, 'cept for Thee and me. And even
Thee is a little tetch'd."* Quaker saying.

Conversations about partnership require patience and understanding. It is important to take the time to share the vision and perspectives of each party to ensure there is a degree of commonality of purpose.

As the partnerships facilitator in these discussions, it is important to enter into conversations with all parties with clarity around:

- ◇ The purpose of the project;
- ◇ The process required to achieve this; and
- ◇ The desired outcomes for all parties.

Partnerships are an essential part of our life as Anglican communities – especially when we seek to serve. They can be complicated and complex. They can comprise of other Anglican groups, local people and organisations, community and government entities. Partnerships are how we can enhance and improve the quality of our service to others. And they are, in themselves, vital mission and outreach to those we work alongside.

Want some ideas and advice about local partnerships?
Contact Mark McCracken on (08) 9263 2124, 0403 368 248 or at
mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au

Practical Community Service and Engagement Initiatives

- Offering Material Assistance
- Op Shops

Two of the most common aspects of our community connections are offering material assistance to people in financial difficulty and meeting people from our locality through an Op Shop. Below are some things to reflect about.

Offering Material Assistance

This form of service has various names. Emergency relief, material aid or assistance, handouts, hampers, food help, and so on. What it comes down to is the offer of assistance to people experiencing financial crisis or hardship.

Our Churches offer this assistance in many ways and also vary enormously in what they provide to people asking for help.

What we offer

There are three main areas of material assistance offered by the Anglican parish community. These are

- Basic food help. Food, sometimes in hampers;
- Emergency Relief services, where people are interviewed and may receive food, vouchers, and referral;
- Case management, that is, ongoing work with people in order to secure a stable financial base on which to build.

All of these types of assistance can be found in some of our Churches.

Some Tips

1. Meeting basic needs. When people approach us asking for food help there is an effective way we can ensure we have resources on hand.

'Pre-Packed' Hampers. If you are dealing with people who arrive unannounced, often at very inconvenient times, it can be difficult to organise food quickly and efficiently. Many times it is a quick rummage in the rectory cupboards, or a walk over to the Church to the Pantry. This has within it certain risks and problems. These days safety has become an issue in dealing with strangers after hours and in empty buildings. It is also hard to provide a useful range of items when we depend solely on what has been placed in the donations basket on Sunday.

One great idea is to create a number of pre packed hampers ('Pre-Packs') and keep them close to hand for unannounced requests for assistance. Depending on your circumstance, they can be for single people, couples or families. The quantities and items might vary, but the way to develop this resource is the same.

Setting Up and Using Pre-Packs:

1. The person who receives the requests makes an estimate of:
 - a. How many visits you are likely to get over a month;
 - b. What sort of people are coming and what their needs are; and
 - c. What is an acceptable level of support the church can offer;
 - d. This is used as a basis for the initial set up of the program.
2. Announce the program in Church and solicit volunteers to take up a 'Pre-pack ministry'.
3. Place these volunteers on a roster, hand out the information sheets and make space for the pre-packs.
4. For the volunteers their commitment entails:

- a. Commit to making up an agreed number of pre-packs - to be ready in a few months;
 - b. Be part of a roster and supplying pre-packs by bringing them to Church when their month comes around;
 - c. In preparation: collect / purchase the items identified on the list. They do this little by little in the months leading up to the rostered period. They can even encourage friends and family to help in this noble work;
 - d. When they put together the pre-pack its best to place all of the items in a sturdy plastic or supermarket recyclable 'green' bag.
 - e. These pre-packs are delivered to Church when rostered.
5. The pre-packs are kept in the rectory and church office for ease of distribution.
 6. Distribute pre-packs on request.
 7. Keep a record of:
 - a. How many requests are received
 - b. The types of people requesting help (e.g. family size);
 - c. Any feedback from the people you help.
 8. Review your findings with the team in the pre-pack ministry after 6 months.

Pre-Pack Items This is largely determined by the people who are to receive the pre-packs and their circumstances. If they are people without secure accommodation, then there is little point in giving them large amounts of foodstuffs that require cooking. The pack also needs to be easily carried which means thoughtful purchases of small items and provision of a sturdy bag with handles. If they are families with children then filling foods like rice and pasta are essential.

If your Church is connected to an Emergency Relief program through Anglicare or other partnerships, there are a number of extras you can include such as bus passes and phone cards. These are invaluable to people experiencing homelessness.

A Pre-Pack Example – for single people who are homeless.

Note: All tins are to be RING PULLS for easy opening.

- o Small Cereal
- o Small long life milk
- o Small Tin baked beans or spaghetti
- o Small Tin fish or meat
- o Instant noodles
- o Muesli Bar
- o Small diced fruit or fruit lollies
- o Fruit box
- o Toilet paper / tissues (flat pack)
- o Plastic cutlery
- o Plastic Bowl
- o A contact card (lists accommodation and support agencies in the area with addresses and phone numbers)
- o *Toiletries (e.g. shampoo, toothpaste, small bars of soap, razor)**
- o *Small Ready tinned soup**
- o *Bus Pass**
- o *Phone card**

* *Optional depending on access to these resources.*

2. Some Important Questions. Thinking about offering emergency assistance from your Church? Here's some points to consider:

What do you feel called to do?

Before you start, check out what services are available in the area you want to cover. Look for the gap in what is available and consider filling that gap or partnering up with other local services. Pray about it.

Where will you operate from?

Do you have suitable premises? What are the regulations within your local council? eg Food storage, kitchen standards. Will people come to you, or will you go to them?

Who will run it?

How often will you run your service?(start small and expand). How many volunteers do you need? Will you need to train your volunteers? Will you need to consider personal safety of your volunteers? Does your parish have personal liability insurance or any other insurance you might need? Who will you report back to (Church Council)?

Value your volunteers

We do not pay our volunteers because the work they do is priceless. Remember to thank one another for the time you are giving to your programme. Remember each of your volunteers will have different skills and life experiences. Make sure they have adequate time to understand your working system and record keeping methods. Value the opinions and suggestion of everyone on your team.

Finances

What finances will you need to set up and run the programme? (equipment, food etc). What are your plans for getting these finances and keeping it going? Have you spoken to Anglicare WA?

Record Keeping

Decide what records you want to keep and how you will keep them. Remember the dignity and privacy of your clients when keeping records or speaking with others.

What if!

What if things go wrong? Eg A difficult client or a client with needs you can't meet. Don't be afraid to re think and change direction if things are not working out.

Remember

- o Some of the people who ask for help may not be embarrassed, but some clients have to reach rock bottom before they come to you. Treat everyone with dignity and compassion, no matter what your private thoughts may be. We cannot impose our personal standards on others.
- o There will be a small number of clients who will take advantage of your service. You will soon pick out those clients and develop a method of dealing with them.
- o Try to avoid being used, but here are some words of comfort: You give of your service in the name of Jesus. If people abuse that gift, it is their responsibility before God. Often these opportunists have children who will go without if you do not help. For every person who takes advantage of you, there will be many genuine clients who will benefit and be grateful for what you are doing.
- o Many people in the community face huge problems, abuse, mental illness, neglect, loneliness, homelessness, and addictions. We can't solve all their problems, but we can give of whatever we have to offer to ease their burden.

Offering More than Crisis Help.

In John 10:10 Jesus announces that as the Good Shepherd “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” As his followers we too can live that principle out in the way we offer care and service to those who come to us.

In the area of material need it is important to consider offering more. To help people move beyond mere survival towards coping and building up their independence. This might mean referring them to financial counselling and other services like that in order to make a change that is ongoing rather than meeting an immediate need that could arise again next week.

Anglicare WA offers a wide range of these services including:

- o Financial Counselling: *Anglicare’s Financial Counselling service helps individuals and families throughout Western Australia with financial support and help in addressing financial problems. Financial Counsellors operate by appointment only. This can be arranged by phoning the service closest to you. Anglicare’s main number is 9325 7033.*
- o The Anglican Clergy Emergency Relief Service (ACERS): *ACERS is a service which provides substantial funds to clergy which can be used to help people re-establish themselves after a financial problem. It is accessed through the Church Partnerships Coordinator on 9263 2124.*

It can also mean looking more deeply. Beyond the presenting problem (“I have no money and lots of bills”) to the deeper struggles (“I am in a violent relationship at home”, “there are significant health problems”, “I feel worthless and rejected”). On the next page is a handy article on this question.

Anglicare WA offers an amazing range of services and events right across Western Australia. To find out more you can check out the website www.anglicarewa.org.au; phone (08) 92325 7033; or email and ask for a copy of the Services Guide mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au.



Wait – There’s More!

Looking beyond the presenting issue

Every person presenting for emergency assistance brings with them a number of other issues that may not be met through food or financial assistance alone. Most people find themselves in crisis through a combination of a number of factors and a good solution needs to address these as well as the problem presented.

You may not be able to meet all or any of these other needs. You may not even be invited by the person asking for help to go any further than the initial request for food or money. It is important, however, to be willing and able to respond if it is appropriate and welcomed by the person asking for help. The most effective way to offer help in these other areas is REFERRAL.

REMEMBER

Don't be scared or put off.
Just **REFER!**

How do I find out what else is going on?

'L.A.M.B'

- ◇ Listen carefully
- ◇ **A**sk – “Is there anything else I can help you with?”
- ◇ **M**ake space
- ◇ **B**e respectful



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER ISSUES?

Issue	Services	A good starting place
Crisis	Out of hours / urgent	Crisis Care Unit 1800 199 008
Financial management (e.g. budgeting, negotiating bills)	Financial counselling	A wide range of agencies offer these services. Check which one is local.
Housing (finding it and staying in it)	Crisis, supported and long term housing for young people, families, homeless individuals.	Anglicare WA (08) 9325 7033
Personal and Relationship Issues	Counselling and Education	Anglicare WA Relationship Services (08) 9325 7033
Health	Community health & advice	There are many services directed to different groups (e.g. children, women, migrants). Check your phone book for local agencies.
Employment	Job training, placement and support	Check your phone book.
Abuse (e.g. domestic violence, child, past abuse)	A wide range of government and community agencies	Anglicare WA (08) 9325 7033 Crisis Care Unit 1800 199 008

Op Shops

- As Ministry
- As Part of a Network

As Ministry

The Mission Shaped Op Shop

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis across the Anglican Communion on the 'mission shaped church'. The broad approach being embraced is one which values innovation alongside tradition, which recognises the church not only as particular places but also as dispersed networks of people across a wide range of communities. There is an emphasis on a 'mixed economy church' which embraces different forms of ministry, ranging from the building of interpersonal relationships to small groups to the formation of new forms of congregational life.

A question that arises in my mind in the midst of the encouraging and challenging material about the 'mission shaped church' is where something as simple as an op shop fits. Are op shops just one of those things which may soon be relegated to the past or do op shops have a part to play in the 'mission shaped church' of the future?

As a child, I went op shopping with my mother and sister during school holidays. As a uni student most of my clothing, household items and furniture came from op shops. I know a bargain when I see one and still find them in op shops from time to time.

In my work, I have learnt a great deal from op shop volunteers about how to build community as well as the coffers. For several years in the 1980s, I coordinated a network of Anglican op shops in Melbourne. In 2000 I had the pleasure of establishing an op shop in central Adelaide - The Magdalene Bargain Centre.

If I can offer any encouragement from this experience it is to say loud and clear that op shops are not just about buying and selling and making money. The fundraising aspects of op shops are significant and there is always more to learn about sales and marketing. Op shops can provide some of the financial backing needed for mission, whether for local parish or community causes, our Diocesan community care organizations or our overseas aid organizations.

Yet of equal, if not greater significance to fundraising is the reality that op shops are about people and are themselves places of mission. At best an op shops offers more than goods for sale - they also offer hospitality, they build community and they practice social inclusion.

The best way we can do this is simply to be open. Keep the door open so people can come in and out. Keep the window open to the light so people can see in and out. Keep our ears and eyes, our hearts and minds open to the opportunity to be a good neighbour through the work of op shops.

We should never underestimate the simple and gentle power of op shops and the ministry of people who work in them. Yes, it is a ministry.

So -what are op shops about beyond buying and selling and making money? Here is my list of what could make an op shop a vital contributor to the 'mission shaped church':

Marks of the Mission Shaped Op Shop

- ◇ Invitation
- ◇ Hospitality
- ◇ Friendship
- ◇ Inclusion
- ◇ Safety
- ◇ Story Telling
- ◇ Faith Sharing
- ◇ Information
- ◇ Networking
- ◇ Volunteers
- ◇ Creativity and Recycling
- ◇ Enterprise
- ◇ Goodwill and Generosity
- ◇ Loss and Grief
- ◇ Celebration
- ◇ Renewal



Invitation Welcome and acknowledge the person and their presence then let them be. People generally don't like being ignored but they don't like being pounced on either. Is our op shop easy to get into or are people confronted with a counter and cash register? Create an open space at the entrance which says 'welcome' and invites a little journey of discovery and mystery.

Hospitality Be discretely attentive to customers and visitors and learn to read the cues they give you when they want to engage in conversation or ask for assistance. Sometimes our relationships with each other can get in the way of this and customers can feel ignored. For example, volunteers at the counter talking about their holidays, being too busy to notice the person. Not good human relations or retail.

Friendship Lonely people often visit op shops as a social outlet. Those of us who work in op shops also seek friendship through this work. It's a matter of extending this sense of friendliness further where we can. This can be as simple as passing the time of day or just listening.

Inclusion Different types of people visit op shops – we need to learn to be unshockable and open to human diversity. If a man comes in asking for women's clothes, it may be that he is going to a fancy dress, or he wants something for his wife or he is a transvestite. We need to be ready for any eventuality and treat each person with dignity and respect. After all - a person is a person and a sale is a sale.

Safety Op shops need to be safe places for ourselves and our customers – we need to be sure we have good safety procedures in case something goes wrong. Can we contact people outside the shop by phone and is there someone we can call on in an emergency? Can we offer a place of safety for customers and visitors – a cairn for the journey, part of their daily or weekly pilgrimage?

Story Telling Op shops can be places of good banter – a good place to spin a yarn. We do have work to do but sometimes our work is to listen and talk. When we take the time to listen to others we acknowledge their value as people. If they trust us

enough they may share personal things and we need to treat these things with confidentiality. Our listening may be of comfort to people without the need to offer advice or solutions. Sometimes we may share a story from our own life to offer empathy and support. There may be times in our listening, when we perceive the need for further assistance or professional help and we need to know how to help people find this.

Faith Sharing Part of our listening and speaking can involve the sharing of our faith stories and journeys. There is no rule to say that this cannot happen in an op shop. Where ever Christians are there is an opportunity to share faith stories. Yet this needs to be done with care and respect.

In our conversation with customers or visitors they may sometimes want to talk about matters of faith. It may be that people share stories of how they have been hurt by the church; how they have been discouraged from asking questions; how they have been challenged in their beliefs by life's troubles. We need to be prepared to begin with listening, and to respond with understanding. Once again, we may be in a position to offer further support from others.

Information Providing information about community resources, services, activities and events can be an important role for op shops as places of community. The best information is not the brochure or the notice on the wall but you – the person who provides the link.

Part of our role in op shops may be to ensure we know enough information about our community to be able to refer people on to a service, or inform them of different ways to get or give help. It is advisable to access or develop a list of community services available for people living in your area.

Networking Op shops are potentially significant networks of people even in small towns. A 'mission shaped church' is about both place and network and an op shop is potentially both. In some communities an op shop can be a vital source of information, so developing an excellence in information and referral can be a significant function. There may be some benefit in developing a contact list of different interests and networks among our volunteers, customers and visitors.

Volunteers Op shops provide a place of community for many people. To what extent are we open to volunteers from the wider community to work with us? Are there any customers who might be interested in becoming a volunteer as well? Are there volunteers who may specialize a bit, even in a small shop, in a particular area such as books, linen or crockery? Volunteer opportunities can be a way of building community and practicing inclusion – and of course having fun.

Creativity and Recycling Some donations may make us think 'what garbage' but sometimes a little creativity can go a long way. There is a revival of crafts using 'waste' materials to make useable and saleable items. This can provide a creative outlet for people who may not be op shop volunteers, but who have an interest in crafts they make at home.

This can sometimes be a way of engaging younger people in op shops, by offering an outlet for the creative re-making of items such as jewellery out of waste materials or jeans with special tears and blotches which can increase their value remarkably.

Enterprise Related to this is the concept of social enterprise. It may seem impossible, but it can and does work. The idea is that people on low incomes make things on consignment then get a share of the profits when sold. This could be organised in partnership with a local neighbourhood centre, youth program or employment

network. For some people having items they have made displayed and sold in our op shop can be a great encouragement to them.

Goodwill and Generosity Donations and offers of help come our way – how well do we respond? How well do we say thanks? Op Shops are places of exchange and thanksgiving – just like when we ‘go to church’!

Loss and Grief Some donations may be made as a result of the death of a loved one, or people moving house for reasons of work or family. Such situations can involve loss and grief for the people who donate items to our op shop. Once again, our response is to listen well, to show understanding, and offer further support we know is available.

Celebration There are many good things about op shops and they are worth celebrating! They can be places of compassion, community and justice. It is good to have events to celebrate the work of op shops and the way they contribute to the life of local communities. When was the last time you had a little op shop party? Plan one - and invite your customers too!

Renewal This is not just a matter of material things, of recycling pre loved clothing and household items. We ourselves are often given a second chance at life and this can even happen through our work in Op Shops. Op Shops can represent the universal and eternal love of God where all is saved and nothing is wasted or lost. Op Shops can be a symbol of renewal if we just let them be. See, nothing is old and all is made new.

The above elements of the ‘mission shaped op shop’ are offered to indicate that op shops are more than just places of buying and selling and making money. This is significant, but what is equally if not more significant is building relationships and communities - where ever we are as Christians – even in our op shops. This can make a difference between an op shop as a good business to an op shop as a vital element of the ‘mission shaped church’.

Let me end by paraphrasing the scripture a little:

Seek first an op shop that is a place of welcome and hospitality; listening and inclusion; community and participation; creativity and enterprise; a place where stories are shared; a place of goodwill, generosity and celebration. Seek first these things of God’s reign of justice and love - and the people will shop; the money will come; and all that we desire in the life of God’s church will be ours to share as well.

In other words - an op shop can be as good a place as any to be the Church at mission!

By Peter Burke, Coordinator of Chaplaincy and Parish Community Work Anglicare SA

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As Part of a Network

1. Community Focus: Linking with Community Groups through your Op Shop

Some of our Op Shops are busy creating opportunities to connect with other community groups and individuals, along with working in partnership with other parishes or Anglican organisations.

Below are some clever ideas and suggestions for developing Op Shop networks.

1. Become a **resource** for community groups

- *Special projects.* There have been a number of appeals from Anglicare and other Anglican agencies for a number of different resources. In the last year Anglican Churches have provided magazines for a school program teaching children about emotional resilience, toys for children's play therapists and fabric for a craft group for socially isolated people. Op Shops are great places to broaden these sorts of appeals to the public. Putting out a basket and asking for people to contribute to these special projects lets them know about the scope of our Anglican caring work and opens the door to conversations about what we as a Church are all about.
- *Musical instruments.* Op Shops sometime find musical instruments among their donations. One of our Op Shops has an arrangement with a local community music program where the Op Shop manager contacts the leader of that group when an instrument is donated. The program works with disadvantaged children through teaching music and is always desperate for instruments and is supported by their local Anglicans through this simple ministry.
- *Scarves.* One Op Shop is situated in an area where large numbers of Muslim refugees have settled, with many more arriving each month. Most refugees arrive with very little and this Op Shop has developed a relationship with a Migrant Resource Centre to supply scarves for newly arrived women who need head coverings.
- *Towels.* Are often hard to sell. Most often they are sent for rags or discarded. Why not approach your local Vet and offer these as a way of supporting their work, and building up a connection in your locality? These relationships are especially handy when the parish wants to hold a Creation / St Francis Day.
- *Craft materials.* It is very simple for Churches with a ministry to local aged care facilities and schools to offer support through the Op Shop. For instance, Op Shops can be wonderful resources for materials used in craft activities, fabrics, bric a brac and so on. If it doesn't sell why not share it?



2. **Work experience:** There are a number of people who need practical experience when it comes to work. Young people wanting work experience and some on Centrelink payments have to accumulate a certain number of hours per week to meet various requirements. A supportive, informal environment is very important in these cases and could be offered by an Op Shop.

3. **Community information.** Libraries and local council offices are vital centres for information sharing in local communities. A very simple addition to an Op Shop's set up can make it also a very useful place for sharing important local information. Why not create a notice board, put in a pamphlet stand or table, contact the local library and shire office and offer to display pamphlets and posters? And if you do this, don't forget to put out information with all of this about what you are offering as a local Church

4. **Vouchers** for your priest or pastoral team to use. Some Churches use their Op Shop to support their pastoral ministry team. They have developed a budget which includes a certain amount towards assistance to people in need. Then vouchers are made up to that money value and are given to the pastoral carers in the parish. When the priest or LPM sees a need, they can give a voucher to that individual or family who can then use it in the Op Shop. A very practical way to support those God sends our way.

5. **Coffee gatherings.** If there any space in or near to your Op Shop you could try this idea. Why not have a free morning tea scheduled to operate during one or more of the Op Shop's opening hours? This is a way for parishioners to meet and interact with local people, a way for locals to meet each other and for visitors to become more comfortable with Church surrounds.

2. Parish Focus: Integrating your Op Shop with Other Ministries

Our Op Shops are one of our points of contact with the local community. In many cases they are our 'public face' and are certainly ideal opportunities for us to engage with people from outside of our congregations.

They are ideal places to make connections. That is, to meet people, and share with them some of the opportunities our Churches offer for social contact, to hear the Gospel, and to receive support and encouragement.

This makes our Op Shops so much more than fundraisers to keep our Churches going. They are remarkable opportunities for ministry.

One simple way to engage this opportunity is to think creatively about how this doorway into our Church community might lead to other ministries. How might we connect those who shop with us to our playgroup, our social group, the craft ladies, our Sunday worship, the Bible study? How do we, through simple invitation offer our customers a much greater experience?

Below is a simple process of planning which might help if you as a Church want to grow your Op Shop ministry further by creating connections within your community.

It's through a hypothetical based on a parish in the metropolitan area.

Background

St Mark's is a solid parish with a number of existing groups. Financially stable. Wanting to explore ways in which the parish can connect more significantly with the community. As it is a hills suburb the township is the area where most community services and activities are offered. St Mark's is close to the centre of all of this.

A Parish Audit revealed the following:

- Infrequently used office space. (*Two offices, with the parish office used Monday and Friday mornings. Other times are through occasional use by the rector.*)
- Successful Op Shop. (*In the parish centre. Open three mornings a week, Monday, Thursday and Friday.*)
- A small but lively playgroup. (*Made up mostly of non-parish young mums and their toddlers. Meeting once a week on Monday afternoon.*)
- A small craft group. (*Made up of mainly retirees. Meeting once a week on Wednesday mornings.*)
- Community garden at the local school. (*A good relationship with the school leadership. We send parishioners to work alongside students in the garden.*)
- Market café: (*Held on Saturdays at the local community markets. Well patronised. A great opportunity to make some money and meet the local people.*)

A Local Needs Survey revealed that:

- This suburb is made up of relatively well off people who own their own homes.
- There is a growing number of retirees and older people who are becoming more house bound. There are also a number of young families buying into the area as older people move into retirement centres.
- There is one other playgroup in the area but it has a waiting list.
- There are not many local community activities as the district is a small one within driving distance of other larger centres.
- There are not a lot of facilities for community groups and services (offices etc) and what are available are expensive.
- The town council is very active and interested in creating community spirit and activities.
- The High School has a number of programs which connect to the community and are always interested in more support. A couple of areas they mentioned were tutoring for struggling students (a 'homework club') and possible work experience opportunities for some students.

Potential Projects

After reflection, prayer and discussion within the parish three projects were identified.

1. LinkUp
2. Homework Club
3. Café Work Experience

LinkUp is the project adopted by the parish that works around the Op Shop as a hub or reference point for other programs.

*Why not consider doing something similar
with your Op Shop opportunity?*



Dealing with Difficult People Situations



Dealing with Difficult People Situations

When we regularly deal with the public we can have a range of experiences from the very lovely to the not so pleasant. There can be occasions where the situation becomes difficult and conflict arises. Obviously no written material can replace commonsense and experience when it comes to dealing with these encounters. But we include some tips here for you to consider.

- **Be prepared to 'let it go'.**

For all of us there are some issues that cannot be compromised. There are times when you must decide to make 'a stand' and in being firm but not aggressive you put your message across to another. There are other times, however, when you can 'let it go'. It may be more productive to ignore their behaviour or even back down. Every difficult situation is different so it's good to choose when to make a stand and when to withdraw.

- **Try to get 'into the head' of the other.**

Whenever you are dealing with difficult behaviour it is important to attempt to understand where it may be coming from. As complicated as this can be (especially in the heat of the moment) trying to understand why they might be acting and behaving in such a manner provides clues about how you can respond. It also helps later as you try to forgive with Christian love what may have been unpleasant or intimidating.

- **Focus on the behaviour not the person.**

It's important that you do focus on the difficult behaviour that you are dealing with rather than the person. You cannot change another, especially when things are conflictual. But you can focus on what the other is doing that is creating the problem. It's easier to ask someone to change how they are acting than to tell them to make a change in who they are or what they believe. You can point towards the consequences of that way of acting.

"When I am shouted at I feel like shouting back" is a lot more effective than "You're ridiculous and should grow up!"

- **Respond rather than React**

This might seem a fine distinction but it is an important principle when dealing with the behaviour of another that disturbs. What is meant here is that it's best to respond thoughtfully to the behaviour rather than reacting to whatever pushes your buttons.

A knee jerk reaction which is defensive or aggressive puts you out of control and can heighten tension and conflict. As difficult as it may become, remaining calm, cool and collected gives you more control of the situation. One way to be more responsive is to listen more than you speak and act. Then you hear the other person's perspective and have some time to consider an appropriate response.

Listening is a dynamic activity and one approach to this is called "Active Listening". It can take some practise to make feel comfortable with this way of dialoguing with others but it is worth the effort. Active Listening involves:

- Attending Skills -A posture of involvement, Eye contact, Non-distracting environment
- Following Skills - Conversational door openers, Minimal encouragers, Infrequent questions, Attentive silence
- Reflecting Skills - Paraphrasing/mirroring, Reflecting feelings (relational), Reflecting meaning (content), Summarizing

The aim of active listening is to

- 1) To understand what another person is saying and thinking - from his or her point of view; and to
- 2) Communicate back and check that understanding with the person doing the talking

The following Chinese character for the verb "to listen" and is a neat summary of what Active Listening is all about:



- **Be calm**

In conflict it's normal for our body to go into 'flight or fight' mode. In a difficult situation this can lead to increased levels of anger or anxiety. As much as possible, remain calm (or at least present yourself that way!). Breathe slowly and deeply. Try to be still and look for a good outcome. If it is possible ask for time out, that is "Can we take a moment and think about this?" Whatever will help you stay in charge of the situation.

- **Safety first**

Generally speaking you should never work in the Op Shop on your own. It is far better to ensure that two or more people are present during opening hours and that a phone of some sort is easy to get to. If a situation ever gets out of control - safety first. Leave the shop as your well being is the top priority.

- **Spend time reflecting after a difficult encounter.**

Debriefing is crucial and is best done with a sympathetic listener who can walk through the experience with you and help add perspective to it. Reflecting on what can be learnt from the experience, about yourself and the way you deal with others can be invaluable, not just for difficult situations but as a way to grow in your own maturity and experience. Then pray - for each other and also the person you encountered.