



Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Presbytery of Loddon Mallee

Placement Profile
Presbytery Minister (Northern Region)

Presbytery	Loddon Mallee
Time Fraction	Full Time
Term	Up to 10 years
Suitable for	Minister of the Word, Deacon, Pastor, Lay Person
Terms and Conditions	Refer to <i>Terms of Placement</i>
Approval Date	

The Primary Purpose of the Placement

The Presbytery Minister (northern region) will engage the congregations throughout the northern region of the Presbytery pastorally, creatively, positively, and courageously in discerning how to continue their witness and service in the most life-giving and effective ways in the midst of the new realities.

The Presbytery Minister (northern region) will work alongside the Presbytery Minister (southern region), to support and equip congregations and individuals in the exercise of their ministry, and working together with the Presbytery to evolve new mission strategy appropriate to the rapidly changing mission context.

The Presbytery Minister (northern region) will be crucial in assisting the Presbytery to engage what the Faithful Futures and Act2 processes discern for our Church.

The Presbytery

The vastness of our Presbytery is both a delight and a challenge, extending from Castlemaine in the south to Wentworth (NSW) in the north, and Rainbow in the West to Heathcote in the East. The church across this presbytery is experiencing radically changed and changing circumstances.

The membership and leadership of the church across the region is aging and contracting, requiring support and resourcing to exercise its role of “oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another’s faith, to bear one another’s burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Jesus Christ.” (BU para 15(c))

Within this context the Presbytery has a vision that all Presbytery leadership will be Relational, Educational and Facilitative.

The Presbytery has created a shared ministry with the North East Presbytery to provide worship resources to small congregations without a Minister. Twice monthly worship resources – including prayers, music, readings, recorded message, and a PowerPoint – are prepared by Ministers (active and retired) that are distributed electronically for congregations to use as much of as they require to engage in meaningful worship together.

The Presbytery has recognised a need to work to maximise the potential of our property. To this end the Presbytery has engaged a Property Liaison person to assist congregations to address these matters.

Workshops facilitated by Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes in July and August 2024 identified three areas of ministry leadership required across the Presbytery:

Northern Presbytery Ministry/Leadership

- CALD Community Ministry
- Pastoral support for Ministers, Pastors and Leaders in local settings
- Ministry with Congregations without Ministers
- Resourcing locals for leadership roles

Southern Presbytery Ministry/Leadership

- eLM 0.5 FTE Resourcing
- Faith Community – education and encouragement
- Pastoral support for Ministers, Pastors and leaders in local settings
- Enabling/resourcing new community in growth corridors Ministry
- Ministry with Congregations without Ministers
- Resourcing locals for leadership roles

Presbytery-wide Ministry/Leadership

- Chairperson
- Property and Resourcing – Maximise potential of properties
- Finance Officer/Treasurer

The Northern Region

The northern region of the Presbytery extends from Wentworth (NSW) in the North West to Pyramid Hill in the South East, and from Moulamein (NSW) in the North East to Rainbow in the South West.

The majority of congregations throughout this region are gathered into clusters for mutual support and to share administrative responsibilities.

The region is sociologically diverse. The region encompasses the large vibrant city in Mildura in the heart of the extensive fruit growing region of Sunraysia with significant numbers of CALD farmworkers and seasonal workers. Larger rural centres of Swan Hill and Kerang service the extended agricultural areas around them. Then there are many agricultural communities gathered around smaller country townships. Accordingly the region comprises seasonal workers, fruit growers, graziers and crop farmers. Some are short-term, others descendants of generations, while others provide the essential services to support these communities.

The Presbytery is blessed to have a plethora of congregations distributed throughout this region and celebrates the faithfulness and vibrancy of the members as they continue to grow and merge into the future, responding to the changes unfolding around them. The Presbytery seeks a resourceful ministry to walk alongside these people in their evolving missional context.

The Presbytery has no fully self-funded ministry placements in this expansive region, which encompasses depopulating rural communities along with the vibrant and expanding community of the Sunraysia. Presently only two of these clusters have Uniting Church Ministers in placement. One is enabled by a 0.2 FTE School Chaplaincy role. The other is supported by a Synod grant. The other congregations across the region are lay led, supported by lay preachers and/or the electronic resources provided by the Presbytery. A cooperating placement with the Anglicans based on Ouyen is currently filled by an Anglican priest supported by Bush Aid.

The Sunraysia region surrounding the vibrant growing city of Mildura has great potential for the Uniting Church to grow an increasingly meaningful presence and ministry centre. It is currently vacant and unable to fund a full-time placement in its present configuration, but has property resources. The Presbytery Standing Committee, having recognised the particular needs of this region, is presently exploring options for providing a viable ministry placement in this northern most extremity of the Presbytery. Should such a ministry be established the Presbytery Minister (northern region) would exercise a collegial role of liaison and support.

The northern most regions of the Presbytery have a significant CALD presence. The Presbytery Minister (northern region) will have responsibility to provide support among these important parts of our church.

Uniting AgeWell operate the Loddon Mallee North Home Care service based in Mildura. This is the only service provided by UnitingVicTas or Uniting AgeWell throughout the northern region of the Presbytery.

Core Purpose

This ministry is seen as critical in this unsettled time to help the church scattered across this region feel connected to, and supported by, the wider church and feel pastorally cared for.

The Presbytery seeks, through this ministry role, to engage with the congregations throughout the northern region of the Presbytery to:

- affirm existing church life and wider community engagement;
- assist with reimagining church life amid the changed and changing circumstances;
- fostering contextualised ministry using relational theology;
- support and strengthen lay leadership; and
- assist congregations connect through the use of technology.

The Presbytery Minister (northern region) will be accountable to the Presbytery through the Standing Committee.

Gifts and Graces

The Presbytery is looking for a person who:

- is a creative, innovative, enthusiastic and committed disciple of Jesus
- has a well-established and grounded spiritual life
- has a passion for, and understanding of, the rural context, including resourcing congregations for worship, leadership and mission
- is able to reflect theologically in ways that connect with rural people
- has the capacity to engage confidently and sensitively with the CALD parts of our church – in particular Pacifika people
- is able to connect meaningfully with people across cultures, theological positions and generations to dream new dreams
- has the ability, patience and capacity to assist our congregations to negotiate change through companionship, mentoring and coaching
- skilled in using electronic communications – specifically in video conferencing (Zoom) and worship resourcing

Qualifications and Experience

- Membership of the Uniting Church in Australia
- Understanding of, and commitment to work within, the faith and polity of the Uniting Church in Australia
- Theological, educational and/or missional leadership qualifications and the capacity to support the diversity of faith expressed in the Uniting Church
- Understanding of the roles of the Councils and Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia, and willingness to work within the Code of Conduct for Ministers or Lay Leaders
- A current Working With Children/Vulnerable People Check
- Current Victorian driver's licence
- Ability and preparedness to be flexible to engage in meetings outside of normal working hours

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Report from Workshops re paid Presbytery placements and positions facilitated by Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes in July and August 2024

Attachment 2 – Map of Presbytery

Attachment 3 - Terms of Placement