

## EASTLAND REGIONAL EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO SYNOD 2012

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Eastland Region covers the north-eastern part of Waiapu Diocese, and consists of the parishes of Wairoa, Waipaoa, Waikohu, Gisborne - Te Hapara, and East Coast. We have a total base population of 52,000, with almost equal numbers of Māori and Pakeha spread over a large geographical area, and some of the highest deprivation indicators in New Zealand.

Working alongside three rohe within Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Tairāwhiti, and with Archbishop Brown Turei based in Gisborne, means cross-tikanga co-operation and a sharing of resources is essential, although how this is expressed varies from parish to parish. The recent combined Tairāwhiti – Waiapu clergy conference highlighted easily we can get busy with our concerns and allow these links to weaken unless we are intentional about building and nurturing relationships. My hope is that we can refocus these links and work together better to advance the wider mission of the Anglican Church with this region.

Physical isolation and poor transport links create unique challenges of living and working in the Eastland region. The blockage of the Waioeka Gorge for some weeks in early 2012 and continuing problems on SH2 south of Wairoa, and with repairs to the Gisborne-Napier railway on hold after a major slip have all impacted on local, regional and diocesan mission. This vulnerability shows the need for maintain our capacity and resilience for mission within the Eastland region and the importance for parishes to be well connected and adequately resourced.

Changes in staffing, including the resignation of Rev'd Blake Ramage as vicar of Gisborne – Te Hapara in February 2012, the reduction of Eastland youth facilitator Rev'd Frank Ngatoro's position to half-time as from the beginning of April, some clergy health issues and my main energies for much of 2011-2012 going into arrangements for celebrating the Transit of Venus at Tolaga Bay in June 2012, have increased the load carried by community priests, especially Rev'ds Philip Dymock and Ron Elder. Rev'd Joan Edmundson, vicar of Waipaoa holds the only fully-stipended position in the region at present, although it is hoped an appointment can be made soon for Gisborne-Te Hapara.

Despite these difficulties and potential limitations, many of the goals we set at our planning day in early 2011 were achieved. A good discussion on sexuality was held at our 2011 regional conference and work has continued to deal with the STI epidemic in Tairāwhiti, Eastland region took responsibility to advance motions around carbon footprint reduction following last year's synod, fifth Sunday regional services have been re-established and youth work, particularly focussed around Top Parish involvement and the groups at Te Hapara, Waipaoa and Waikohu, has continued to grow. Changes at Waiapu Anglican Social Services at diocesan level meant that a wider discussion around matching needs to services, and increasing the parish – agency interface were put on hold, but it is hoped to find a new way forward, especially with the renovations at Te Hapara Whanau Aroha Centre.

Monthly meetings of regional executive gather clergy and laity from all parishes except Wairoa, and are the primary regular gathering to co-ordinate our mission and ministry for the region. Grateful thanks to Holy Trinity parish who continue to host most of these meetings; to Frances White, (who has retired this year as minutes secretary), and to Rev'd Adrienne Bruce, Bishop's chaplain for Eastland and Bay of Plenty, who attends most of our meetings, making a direct link with the diocese. Wherever possible, we co-ordinate training and support events to cut down on travelling for clergy and laity, and use email to better communicate between meetings.

I also hope that both the work done by Bishop David and Adrienne in recent months, and holding our regional conference here at Wairoa today, help build better connections with this part of the region. I appreciate that a small local team, distance and work commitments, exacerbated by differences of opinion, can create barriers to involvement.

I trust that this year the entire region can all work together and provide support and encouragement in mission and ministry.

Ma te Atua koutou e manaaki

Rev'd Stephen Donald - Chairperson