

# OUR DREAM FOR REVESBY

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK  
2019-2021





# INTRODUCTION

This strategic framework is our dream for Revesby Uniting Church and our community. It acknowledges and recognises that we are living, playing and worshipping in the dreams of the congregations that came before us, as well as captures the dreams of our current congregation – framing the legacy that we want to leave for our community.

With a desire for deepened engagement and revitalisation of our community, Revesby Uniting Church held an appreciative enquiry to develop a strategic framework. This framework is an articulation of the dreams we have for our Church, and the community we serve and walk alongside.

It is a framework developed as a community, for our community.

We shared stories of what defines Revesby Uniting Church, mapped our strengths and captured our bold, ambitious and exciting dreams for the future. This document is the culmination of all that came from that process;

1. **Recognising and acknowledging where we have come from**
2. **Celebrating the strengths of our community**
3. **Sharing dreams for our community**
4. **Planning and laying the foundations for realising those dreams**

Our dream for Revesby is....

*To be a welcoming, inclusive and curious community, finding light through wrestling with scriptures.  
A place of wholistic engagement, where we learn to care for ourselves, each other and creation.*

This dream is big. It's a wholistic approach to nurturing, supporting and strengthening ourselves, each other and creation.

We acknowledge that it will take time, resources and energy to achieve what this framework contains – and as such we will be strategic in prioritising where and how our resources are utilised. Over the next three years Revesby Uniting Church will focus on setting these foundations in relation to three strategic areas;

- 1. A space and place for all**
- 2. A hub for the community**
- 3. Stable and sustainable operations**

These are the foundations that need to be set in order to see this dream come to life.



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# WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM

As we embark on this journey, seeking to realise the dreams of Revesby Uniting Church in 2019, it is important to acknowledge that we worship, gather and serve, in the realised dreams of past congregations. These people had the courage to dream big. Dream about new possibilities for meeting the needs of a growing community. Not only did they dare to dream, but they were willing to use their time, talents and money to turn their dreams into the reality that we now experience.

In 1948, a tiny church on the corner of The River Road and Uranus Road opened ready to serve the new and growing community of Revesby. In the years that followed the congregation grew with the population of Revesby. In July 1969 it was decided that the property would be sold to purchase a larger property at 219 The River Road. The dream was to design a multipurpose church facility that would meet the increasing needs of a growing church community. But the dream was even greater! The dream was to provide not only a church, but also a childcare centre and aged care units. This congregation pioneered the way for the community facilities we have today. This dream for an intergenerational community was truly visionary for its time.

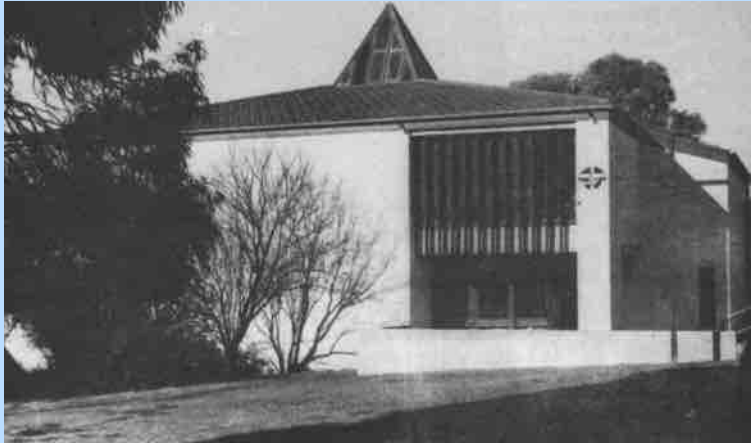
This was realised with a new church building opening on 11th December 1971, with both the childcare centre and eight aged care units following in 1973.

This heralded a time of tremendous growth with a large congregation, Sunday schools, youth groups, adult fellowship groups and activities – all flourishing. Once again the congregation saw a need to grow. It funded the addition of a new meeting room and kitchen. Over the years these additions have facilitated many new activities.

Over the past 70 years, many people's lives have been enhanced as they have enjoyed an extraordinarily wide range of activities and services offered to the local community. This all came about through the dreaming and visioning of earlier congregations. They had a desire to be a vital and relevant presence in their community and brought this dream into reality. This was their legacy.

Today we worship, play, learn, live and enjoy each other's company in a space which was the dream and visions of these luminaries. They were bold and ambitious in their dreaming – and now it's our turn. Our opportunity to offer up dreams. Dreams for ourselves, society and creation. Our dream for the Revesby.

And here is where we start.



“Today we  
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# METHODOLOGY

With a desire for deepened engagement and revitalisation of our community, Revesby Uniting Church held an appreciative enquiry to work together to develop a roadmap for realising the dreams we have for our Church, and the community we serve and walk alongside. This process entailed a 'Day of Dreaming', gifts and skills mapping through a membership audit, consultation with Church Council, and many cups of tea.



This is a framework developed as a community, for our community. Dreaming together we shared stories of what defines Revesby Uniting Church, we mapped our strengths and captured our bold, ambitious and exciting dreams for the future.

1. Recognising and acknowledging where we have come from
2. Celebrating the strengths of our community
3. Sharing dreams for our community
4. Planning and laying the foundations for realising those dreams

This framework is seeded from all that came out of that process.





# GIFTS, SKILLS & TALENTS

The gifts, skills and experience that members self-identified mapped well to the community strengths as expected. We are strong in areas that benefit engagement with the local community. The responses also revealed that we lack some of the more operational and administrative skills such as finance and accounting.

**Top** three skills members identified:



**Bottom** three skills members identified:



## CAPACITY

We asked about our members willingness to participate, and where they felt they had capacity to utilise their gifts. Revesby is a community willing to volunteer their time, but uncertain where their skills are best placed to serve. The capacity to provide additional financial support received the lowest response.

## MOVING FORWARD

Consideration of these insights, and sensitivity to the current capacity of our membership, is necessary in sustaining energy and motivation to enact this framework. The responses identified a strong desire for leadership and clear direction. As such we need to nurture a culture of participation and engagement, through providing structured and clearly articulated opportunities for people to step into.

The dreams of this strategic framework cannot be realised without a willingness by our members to use their time, talents and money to turn this dream into a reality. This dream cannot be realised without these resources, and as such Council must be strategic in prioritising activities and implementation. This strategic framework has included financial management and people management as a priority area to ensure the stable and sustainable operations of our community.

# WHERE WE ARE GOING

This strategic framework is focussed on establishing strong foundations and sustainable operations, while still allowing for deepened engagement with our community. It takes into consideration how we can realise the dreams identified in this framework, and how we can nurture and care for our congregation as we bring this dream to life.

## OUR DREAM FOR REVESBY

*To be a welcoming, inclusive and curious community,  
finding light through wrestling with scriptures.  
A place of wholistic engagement,  
where we learn to care for ourselves, each other and  
creation.*

## WHO WE ARE

Revesby Uniting Church seeks to be a place of light that learns from the vision of Jesus and engages with gospel stories. A place to have spiritual conversations and embrace mystery, and carry the spiritual conversation beyond the church walls.

We are a diverse and inclusive community that seeks to be a beacon that brings light through sharing, learning and nurturing. A place where people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and the LGBTQIA+ community feels comfortable to share in the ups and downs of life. To realise this mission Revesby Uniting Church needs to be a place where people feel safe to articulate and wrestle with thoughts, feelings and doubts. To be a place where people come in times of crisis, and times of joy. A place that fosters authentic relationships that encourage exploration and engagement, as well building ownership and belonging.

We seek to be compassionate and active members of our wider community, as well as reflective and thoughtful people who care for each other and God's creation. To be a community that nurtures and participates in the restoration of our land and waters. Working for the renewal of all things we come together to seek justice, peace and love in the world.

# WE ARE COMMITTED TO...

Authenticity and inclusion

Welcoming and valuing everyone

Seeking meaning and purpose in our daily  
lives

Caring for God's creation

Exploring the Christian faith, encompassing a  
variety of expressions of faith practices and  
understandings

Asking questions, and looking beyond easy  
answers

Using the power of coffee and conversation  
to bring healing and hope

Finding practical, real life expressions of  
love and justice in our community and  
beyond

Not taking ourselves too seriously

# THE FRAMEWORK

This dream is big. It's a wholistic approach to nurturing, supporting and strengthening ourselves, each other and creation.

We acknowledge that it will take time, resources and energy to achieve what this framework contains – and as such we will be strategic in prioritising where and how our resources are utilised. Over the next three years Revesby Uniting Church will focus on setting these foundations in relation to three strategic areas. These are the foundations that need to be set in order to see this dream come to life.

## OUR FOCUS AREAS

<b>1. A SPACE &amp; PLACE FOR ALL</b>	<b>BUILDING MODERNISATION</b>	<b>GREEN SPACE REVILATISATION</b>
<b>2. A HUB FOR THE COMMUNITY</b>	<b>SPIRITUALITY</b>  <b>PROGRAMS</b>	<b>INCLUSIVE &amp; AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS</b>  <b>COMMUNICATING &amp; ADVOCATING EFFECTIVELY</b>
<b>3. STABLE &amp; SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS</b>	<b>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>  <b>PEOPLE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>  <b>CREATION CARE &amp; RENEWAL</b>

# 1. A SPACE & PLACE FOR ALL



“Our building and green spaces will reflect who Revesby Uniting Church is as a community – welcoming, colourful and growing. A place that provides, nurtures and nourishes.”

It is important for all to feel welcome at Revesby Uniting Church. We acknowledge that this is influenced by the physical space and surrounds; as spaces can offer a sense of comfort, inspiration, peace and play. Intention around how we engage with space and place is also significant in ensuring the diverse needs of the community can be met effectively. This includes the utility as well as the aesthetics of the church building and grounds.



# 1.1 BUILDING MODERNISATION

A revitalisation and modernisation of the building will be undertaken, with a focus on curating spaces that are intended to meet the needs of the various members and groups at Revesby. Enhancing the utility of spaces will provide opportunities to engage in a wider variety of programs, and improve how the site is used on a daily basis.

## GOALS

- Improve the visibility, availability and accessibility of church premises
- Revitalise and modernise the church building aesthetics
- Curate spaces that are welcoming and to utilise the space more effectively
- Review audit of spaces and programs - ensuring adequate consultation for prioritising and actioning any changes
- Meet the diverse needs of the local community

## ACTIONS

- Establish sub-committee with Terms of Reference to improve the utility and aesthetics of the physical spaces of the church
- Conduct an audit of physical spaces and how they are utilised to provide insights and recommendations on how spaces can be used most effectively
- Improve office space for church administrative purposes – including a printer and resource storage
- Include more art in the church space



# 1.2 GREEN SPACE REVITALISATION

Revesby Uniting is lucky to have large grounds with generous green spaces at the front of the property. A green space revitalisation will be conducted with the intent of building a community garden at the front of the church that showcases to our wider community who Revesby is – bright, welcoming and growing. This community garden will provide opportunity to engage with and care for God’s creation, nurture and nourish our community, and offer a place to connect with ourselves, God and each other.

The community garden project will integrate the following features in its design to best meets the diverse needs of the community:

- Vegetable plots
- Purpose built playground for nature play
- Indigenous bush tucker plants
- Sensory beds for peoples with a disability
- Meditation/contemplation space

The garden will have numerous applications, and as a result will be able to positively influence a number of outcomes. These applications can include:

- Production of food for church programs
- Playgroups
- Sustainability and gardening programs
- Meditation spaces fostering spiritual wellbeing
- Panania Free Rangers
- Koori Homework Club

These possible outcomes include; increased visibility of the church; improved food security for the community; improved health outcomes for elderly in the community; decreased social isolation; and increased gardening and sustainability literacy.



## GOALS

- Increase visibility of Revesby Uniting Church through presenting a welcoming and colourful environment
- Provide opportunity for wider engagement through purpose built green-spaces

## ACTIONS

- Establish a garden sub-committee to action the grant spending
- Conduct stakeholder consultation including program co-ordinators, local Indigenous elders and community group leaders
- Develop a design and staged implementation plan to meet desired outcomes of the community garden project
- Roll out the staged implementation plan
- Hold community garden opening event



## 2. A HUB FOR THE COMMUNITY



“Revesby Uniting Church will be a thriving community hub, known in the wider community as a place of dreaming, where people from all walks of life can come and engage physically, emotionally and spiritually.”

Revesby Uniting Church seeks to be a point of connection, partnership and love in our local community. The area in which Revesby resides is a diverse community, with a wide variety of needs. We seek to build a hub that engages deeply with our local community and takes peoples needs seriously. The hub will be a place for people throughout their life journey, reinvigorating the tired, befriending the lonely and always digging deep to lend a hand.

This hub will nourish spiritual conversations, provide for those in need, and offer opportunities to share in community with one another. Our hope is that Revesby Uniting Church becomes known in the wider community as a place of dreaming, where people from all walks of life can come and engage physically, emotionally and spiritually.

# 2.1 SPIRITUALITY

We believe that a spiritually healthy community is engaged, inclusive and curious. One that follows the ways of Jesus, and seeks light through wrestling with scriptures. We value the importance of church as a place for exploration, learning and questioning – acknowledging that this journey is different for everyone. We seek to encourage exploration of biblical texts, and offer a variety of avenues for people to deepen and strengthen their spiritual practice. We also acknowledge that we can learn from other faith traditions, learning from their teachings and practices.

## GOALS

- Encourage the community to explore and engage with biblical texts
- Offer a variety of avenues to the community to deepen and strengthen spiritual practice
- Revitalise worship, and increase diversity in offerings during worship

## ACTIONS

- Run Interfaith Month
- Establish worship team
- Invite local Aboriginal elders to share their practice and spiritual understandings
- Diversify music offerings
- Offer a program of “taster” activities to encourage community to explore alternative forms of spiritual practice
- Explore ways of integrating aspects of Aboriginal spirituality into our building and/or practices
- Make spaces available for local community groups and/or practitioners to utilise for programs (eg: Tai Chi, prayer group, community yoga, meditation)



## 2.3 DIVERSE PROGRAMS

Programs provide us with a way to build relationships, provide for others and deepen our engagement with the community around us – all while having a little fun!

To meet the diverse needs, skills and desires in our community, it is important we provide a diverse offering of programs. To structure this diversity of offerings, so that we are engaging with a purpose on things that matter, our programs are categorised into four domains:



### **Education**

Sharing of our skills and empowering through learning.



### **Provision**

Sharing of our resources, gifts and talents.



### **Community building**

Having some fun and sharing in community with each other.



### **Advocacy & social justice**

Lending our voice and actions to issues that matter.

We are limited in resources and volunteers so it is important we invest in establishing programs that cover more than one domain. Our Community Garden Revitalisation is a wonderful example of this approach as it provides for the community, educates and builds skills, and provides a safe and welcoming environment for cups of tea and conversation.

## GOALS

- Empowering the community to use their gifts and talents
- Engaging with a purpose on things that matter:
  - Education
  - Provision
  - Community building
  - Advocacy and social Justice
- Deepening engagement with existing groups including; Playgroups, Knitting Group, Peaceful Planters.

## ACTIONS

- Establish 'Current Affairs Group'
- Establish pastoral care team
- Establish activities team
- Develop a calendar of activities to offer opportunities for social engagement
- Strengthen Community Garden volunteer program
- Hold a thanksgiving service for Mirambeena volunteers
- Run events that include Revesby Uniting Church Child Care Centre and Mirambeena
- Explore scaling of playgroup programs
- Re-introduce Big Meals on Little Budgets and/or explore alternative food security programs

# 2.4 COMMUNICATING & ADVOCATING EFFECTIVELY

We are committed to finding practical, real life expressions of love and justice in our local community and beyond. We will engage the voices within our community, and lend our voice to issues that matter. To do this we need to design and implement effective ways to articulate and communicate our values, and the work we do.

This framework will improve:

- How we communicate with each other;
- How we engage and affirm the stories of our community;
- Our identity in the community; and
- How we advocate on issues that matter, in particular on equity and diversity, interfaith dialogue and listening to Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander voices.



## GOALS

- Strengthen communication channels to and from the church membership
- Engage the voices in our community, and help share the stories held within it to recognise and affirm
- Communicate the identity of Revesby Uniting Church more widely as a welcoming, open and diverse community
- To be bold in advocating on issues that matter, standing alongside marginalised people

## ACTIONS

- Post regularly on social media, including linking the website blog to facebook
- Contact and engage the local media when lending our voice to an issue
- Diversify communication streams, including online blog and newsletter
- Provide an electronic and physical newsletter to increase access to information, and allow wider dissemination to the local community
- Improve signage out front of the church
- Improve quality and accessibility of Revesby Uniting Church reporting



# 2.4 INCLUSIVE & AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

We are committed to authenticity and inclusion, welcoming and valuing everyone. To do this we will intentionally foster strategic relationships to strengthen the fabric of our local community – seeking ways to identify, connect and sustain relationships. This requires open and transparent communications, authentic engagement and oftentimes having the courage to participate in difficult and confronting conversations.

We acknowledge we can do more to listen to the most marginalised in our community. There are many for whom church has been a place of rejection and judgement. We are also committed to ensuring all feel welcome and safe in our community; this includes the LGBTQIA+ community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people of different or no faith.



## GOALS

- Identify, connect and sustain strategic relationships
- Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land
- Establish relationships with LGBTQIA+ members of our local community
- Nurture a culture of willingness to engage in difficult and confronting conversations, and exploration of difference

## ACTIONS

- Acknowledgement of Traditional owners and custodians on church building
- Invite local Indigenous Elders, LGBTQIA+ and local religious leaders to share at Revesby Uniting Church and participate in significant events
- Adhere to the 'Statement of access and welcome' (UCA guidelines)
- Fly a rainbow flag during Mardi Gras
- Run Interfaith Month
- Deliver engaging educational programs for church members

# 3. STABLE & SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS



“Governance and policy at Revesby Uniting Church will support long-term sustainability and growth in capacity to share God’s vision of love and hope to the world through its operations. A church that manages its financial resources sustainably, nurtures and fosters involvement and participation, and remains values aligned in all decisions.”

We acknowledge that it will take time, resources and energy to achieve much of what this framework contains – and as such our leadership needs to be strategic in prioritising where and how our resources are utilised. We are a small community, so finding adequate resourcing and energy can be difficult at times. Given the insights of the membership audit, we also need to nurture a culture of participation and engagement, through providing structured and clearly articulated opportunities for people to step into.

This dream in its entirety cannot be realised without these resources, and therefore Council must be strategic in prioritising activities and implementation. This strategic framework has included Stable and Sustainable Operations as a strategic focus area to support the rolling out of this framework.

# 3.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Not many of our members are able to increase their current levels of financial support, so we must seek out alternative ways of securing sustainable funding for operations. Sustainable funding ensures we are not dependent on a single resource stream. We aim to build the church's financial capacity to be able to continue to support full-time ministry and offer innovative programs and support services, sharing God's vision of love and hope to the world.

## GOALS

- Return positive budget results for FY19/20, FY20/21 & FY21/22
- Meet our grant commitments
- Increase income from grant programs for strategically aligned projects and initiatives
- Increase in targeted fundraising for strategically aligned projects and initiatives

## ACTIONS

- Apply for grants in line with outcomes identified in the strategic framework
- Improve opportunity and accessibility of giving, including direct debit transfers
- Promotion of space for hire to improve mid-week income



## 3.2 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

We have a diverse, generous and skilled community. Our membership audit revealed people are willing to volunteer their time, however they desire stronger leadership to guide where their gifts are best placed. This strategic framework seeks to create structures that enable and support, as well as challenge people to step into places of deepened engagement and service. To do this we need to identify and empower our members to utilise their skills and talents to enact better the dreams of the community.

Acknowledging we are small in numbers, and a number of our members currently serve in a significant capacity, increasing our membership is necessary to ensure sustainability. We seek to nurture a culture of involvement and participation in church leadership and programs.



### GOALS

- Identify and empower people to utilise their skills and talents to enact better the vision of the community
- Nurture a culture of involvement and participation in church leadership within the existing church membership
- Increase church membership
- Increase program participation

### ACTIONS

- Conduct a broader membership audit to understand the gifts and talents of our community better
- Create structures that enable & challenge people to step into leadership roles
- Develop clearly articulated strategies for programs and church operations to enable people to raise their hand and participate – including implementation plans for programs
- Establish an Innovation Fund to allow us to invest in people's ideas
- Obtain PCBU status to broaden our options in regards to hiring and supporting program delivery
- Hire an administration assistant to support grant applications and program administration



## 3.3 GOVERNANCE

When we make decisions aim to discern the guidance of the Spirit in response to the Word of God, and in response to the community our decisions impact. The role of our governing bodies is to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements, and further enable the pursuing of the dreams of the community.

This requires our leadership to operate in open and transparent ways, communicating effectively with the congregation, and for our congregation to communicate openly with leadership. We aim for our operations to reflect our values, and remain focussed on seeking light with those in and beyond our community.

### GOALS

- Meet our statutory and regulatory requirements
- Improve committee participation from membership, with succession planning in place
- Our leadership operate in open and transparent ways, communicating effectively with the congregation, and for the congregation to communicate openly with leadership
- Our congregation actively participate in informing, supporting and encouraging our leaders in the work they undertake
- Our policy and operations reflect the values of our congregation ensuring inclusivity, and environmental sustainability.



### ACTIONS

- Develop long-term strategic plans to guide program delivery, and align resource expenditure to strategic focus areas
- Develop policy in line with strategic priorities: inclusivity & sustainability
- Regular reporting to congregation on how we are performing in line with the goals articulated in this strategic framework
- Obtain PCBU status to broaden our options in regards to hiring and supporting program delivery
- Develop clearly articulated roles and responsibilities for leadership positions
- Ensure succession planning is in place for church committees, church teams and program co-ordination
- Develop compliance register

## 3.4 CREATION CARE & RENEWAL

Acknowledging that we live, move and play in creation, we believe we are called into relationship with creation. This relationship is one of interconnection, and interdependence. We are witness to the fact this has not been realised, and seek to play a role in the reconciliation and renewal of creation. Revesby Uniting Church seeks to be a community that ensures care for God's creation in all our operations and programs. This role takes three forms; ensuring we have appropriate policies and practices in place to reduce our impact, educating and informing our community in ways to better care for the world, and celebrating our relationship with creation.

### GOALS

- Ensure that renewal of creation frames all we do, including our resource use and procurement practices
- Become an educated church community regarding ways we can participate individually and corporately in sustainable practices
- Integrate connection to creation in our spiritual practices, and celebrate the gift of a diverse and abundant world

### ACTIONS

- Review sustainability policy & procedures, including procurement & investments – with reference to 'For the Whole Creation' document (UCA document)
- Conduct an audit of current resource usage, and provide recommendations for where more sustainable and ethical options can be utilised
- Develop a procurement policy that sources sustainable and ethical options where available
- Provide educational programs that promote environmental sustainability literacy and practice, in partnership with local sustainability groups
- Use toilet paper from 'Who Gives a Crap'



# REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Revesby Uniting Church, 2019 Membership Audit.
- Uniting Church Assembly, 2019, 'FIFTEENTH ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL – 19 FOR THE WHOLE CREATION' <https://uniting.church/19-for-the-whole-creation/>
- Uniting Church Assembly, 2019, '30 Disability Access Guidelines', <https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/30-Disability-Access-Guidelines.pdf>



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Uniting Church