

## **Report on the Regional Care Development Fund (RCDF) Research Project for the Sydney Region Aged Care Board**

*October 20, 2005*

### **Introduction**

In approving the regionalisation of aged care, the Synod also approved a short, and it appears a not very well defined proposal, which stated that each Region would set aside an amount of 0.25% of the Region's annual income for a Regional Care Development Fund (RCDF).

The basis for the fund is care initiatives, and the Sydney Regional Board has resolved to restrict the allocation of funds to aged care projects. The amount for the Sydney Region has been estimated to be approximately \$70 000 per year, but the amount will no doubt increase as the services for the Region develop.

This project is approached from the perspective of a past volunteer in aged care work (including practical liaison with elderly residents in outings) and current active involvement in a community based organisation, namely, the Uniting Church.

Even the local church community is essentially a group of volunteers, and development of the community is usually marked by characteristics that are peculiar to the local congregation and sometimes the local area. In the Uniting Church, and in the Presbytery of Sydney there has been a significant orientation to caring projects, a fact related to the large proportion of Parish Missions within the presbytery bounds. Over time, these Missions have changed their emphasis and relationship to the original Mission, and in some cases no longer have the intimate connection between Word and Deed.

I need to highlight from the start that while the funds available will be helpful, they are limited and will allow funding for either one substantial project or a number of smaller projects. I have decided to focus on the possibility of a number of smaller projects, firstly in order to encourage greater interaction between the region and as many congregations as possible, and secondly, because there are excellent voluntary support networks in several areas, and these may be critical to long-term involvement.

A number of congregations and individuals were chosen to discuss the needs-based aspects of the project. This included (usually) older members from the congregations which had previously had local aged care boards, or a past connection:

Church in the Market Place

Burwood-Croydon

Leichhardt (only one member)

Marrickville

and one congregation in the Eastern Zone, in an area with little church aged care focus at present (Mascot Beckenham).

I had hoped to include four other congregations with significant older persons, but at this stage there was not sufficient interest for any group. I also had informal discussions with six members of four of these congregations. I have also had some interest from other congregations, but decided to concentrate on the locations more closely linked to the aged care areas for this present study.

Approximately thirty five members of Presbytery of Sydney congregations were involved in these discussions, and about 20% of these were residents in a UCA aged care facility. Over 80% of the people involved in the groups were women aged 65 years or over. Four ministers were involved (including three under fifty years of age). The high percentage of older women is consistent with the higher proportion of older female members in all congregations.

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## **1. Basic overview of the demographics of Sydney Presbytery congregations.**

- 1.1 The Presbytery of Sydney is a slightly difficult Presbytery to stereotype. The demographic patterns are similar in some ways to other Uniting Church congregations, especially for age, education and professional orientation, but there are also significant differences, which I will note below. According to the 2001 National Church Life Survey, the median attendance for UCA congregations is thirty one persons. In the Presbytery of Sydney about one-third of the congregations would now have less thirty one persons in regular attendance. The figure is only higher than nationally because of the significant proportion of migrant-ethnic congregations which have a family based membership and often therefore a larger core group. Overall, the Presbytery is the most complex region and Presbytery in Australia, let alone NSW. There are fourteen presbyteries in NSW. For example, the Presbytery of Sydney has seventy nine recognised congregations (and one faith community). I realise there could be technically eighty congregations, but am working on the probable number for 2005. There are four significant features of the Presbytery of Sydney:

### **1.1.1 Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) or migrant-ethnic congregations**

Counting the three Wesley congregations (not including Wesley International, which while English speaking has an orientation to people of Asian background), there are thirty seven NESB congregations (47%). No other presbytery has this proportion of NESB congregations. These congregations have more attenders than the Anglo congregations in the Presbytery.

It is worth noting that the Dutch Congregation, the earliest migrant-ethnic congregation (formed as part of the Presbyterian Church before union), now meets for at least monthly worship at Abel Tasman Village at Chester Hill, following the closure of the Dutch Church at Ultimo. A small faith community now meets in a café style church at Ultimo.

### **1.1.2 Congregations outside the technical bounds of the Presbytery**

Nearly half of the NESB congregations are outside the bounds of the presbytery. This is unique to the Presbytery of Sydney.

Many NESB congregations developed as Parishes in the Sydney City region first and then established congregations in other parts of the metropolitan area. Over time some have grown apart from their 'mother' congregation and are now a congregation of another presbytery.

### 1.1.3 Wesley Mission

Wesley Mission has ten congregations. Three are NESB, one is a chaplaincy based at Frank Vickery Village (and in Georges River Presbytery), and another is at Edward Eager Lodge in Darlinghurst, a ministry to the homeless and poor.

Wesley Mission also conducts the presbytery's second aged care region, and has ministry in aged care in, and beyond the bounds of the Presbytery of Sydney.

This report will not consider Wesley Mission Congregations because they connected to their own Regional Aged Care Board, and for statistical purposes, congregational attendance figures will not be included for consideration, simply because they skew the age factor in particular toward the youthful category, through the International Congregation which has an attendance at Sunday worship of more than eight hundred.

### 1.1.4 Parish Missions overall

At one stage the Presbytery of Sydney had nine of the fourteen parish missions in NSW. Due to the Synod and Board of Mission review of Parish Missions in the 1990s (I was a member of the review team), and following consideration of their future, two parish missions agreed to relinquish this status. Now the six main Parish Missions are:

*Ashfield, Bondi Beach, Newtown, Paddington, Wayside and Wesley Mission. Leichhardt* is also designated as a Parish Mission, but it no longer has the relationship to the ministry of the Aged Care Homes, which was the basis for it being a Parish Mission.

## 1.2 Zones in the Presbytery

The Presbytery of Sydney has been divided into Zone Areas for some time for the purpose of identification and also overall mission planning. These zones are helpful for the Sydney Region Aged Care Board because each of the former local boards is in a defined zone.

**City (4 congregations plus 7 Wesley)**, including Paddington and Kings Cross. I have decided not to focus on the City Zone, due to the location of most aged care facilities, the specialist ministry orientation of these congregations, and the metropolitan wide membership of the city based congregations in particular.

**Eastern (13 congregations)** (including Mascot region). This includes Church in the Market Place at Bondi Junction (CMP), founding congregation for Edina Aged Care Services. The two largest congregations are CMP, and Mascot Wesley, which has a focus on a Tongan Community.

**Inner West (12 congregations)** (the area up to Ashfield). This includes several long standing mission based congregations, notably Leichhardt, the founding parent for Aged Care Work through its Parish Mission). Most congregations are small in size (Newtown Mission is the exception), and nestled within trendy and often younger person environments. There are also four Tongan congregations, which would have family based membership more than the median size of a UCA congregation.

**West (24 congregations)** (from Ashfield out). This includes more established suburban congregations, including the Burwood Croydon congregations, founding congregations for Woodfield Aged Care. Some of the larger congregations in this area are NESB, including two Korean (at Strathfield and Concord), one Indonesian (Malvern Hill), and one Tongan (Ashfield). Several of the suburban congregations have a median attendance equal to or more than twice than the UCA average, including Concord, Strathfield (Carrington Ave), and Five Dock.

### **1.3 Congregational Statistics**

The following congregational information is relevant to the Presbytery of Sydney. It is based on figures I have gleaned from personal observation and attendance during the last two – three years, as well as advice, culminating in my estimate for attendance in 2005. NCLS figures will also be used, but I believe these should be considered with care, given they are now four years old.

Number of congregations: 79 (**and one faith community**)

Number of congregations in the region: 62

Number of congregations in Sydney Aged Care Region: 53  
(Excluding Wesley and congregations outside the boundaries of the Presbytery)

Of the 53 congregations:

**City (4 congregations)**

**East (13 congregations, 3 of these NESB)**

**Inner West (12 congregations, 4 NESB)**

**West (24 congregations, 11 NESB)**

**NESB – 18** (two of these are Korean congregations in the Korean Commission. This has become a quasi presbytery, and these congregations have little to do with the Presbytery of Sydney). While some NESB congregations may vary in attendance at different times of the year, there is usually a strong identification with a congregation in terms of belonging. NESB congregations often have a limited amount of contact with the councils of the church, especially the presbytery (Yes, some Anglo congregations also have limited contact as well).

**Older Anglo based congregations – 15.** Two of this group would have an attendance of approximately twice the UCA median (say above 60 persons). Most congregations would have less than twenty regular attenders. The long term future of these congregations is clearly questionable.

**More mixed Anglo based congregations – 20.** Six congregations in this group would have an attendance of approximately twice the UCA median (say above 60 persons).

The Presbytery Mission Officer, Revd Peter Godwin has kindly provided the following statistics for the three zones I am mainly considering. The age profile of the Uniting Church is clearer in presbyteries without a very large congregation, like the Wesley International congregation and given that Wesley Mission is not considered within the Sydney Regional Aged Care Board, Wesley attendance figures are excluded, giving a more reasonable set of figures for comparison.

These statistics are based on those congregations which returned the 2001 NCLS information, and due to the incomplete nature the information should be taken as a guide.

### **East**

Average Age - 57

Female % - 73.6

Male % - 26.4

### **Inner West**

Average Age - 49

Female % - 58.3

Male % - 41.7

**West**

Average Age - 56

Female % - 65.3

Male % - 34.7

The main factors which are relevant are:

- \* Large proportion of females, especially in Eastern Zone.
- \* Older age profile, especially for Eastern Zone and Western Zone.
- \* Seven of the fifteen congregations with mainly older Anglo members are in the Eastern Zone.

The Eastern Zone in particular has a significant older group of members, and the average age would be much higher if the attendance figures for Church in the Market Place are taken out. Due to privacy restrictions it is difficult to obtain statistics that relate to each congregation. Indeed because of the small size of some congregations it could be possible to identify individuals and their profile, or at least stereotype beliefs and attitudes.

#### **1.4 Theological orientation of the congregations:**

The overwhelming theological orientation of the membership of the congregations is traditional or conservative evangelical, especially within the migrant-ethnic communities and the evangelical missions like Wesley and Newtown. If Wesley Mission is included then my estimate is that 70% of congregations would adopt for example, a more traditional position on sexuality issues, with 15% a strong liberal position and 15% a mixed response. In terms of individual members, there is a small group of strongly liberal members (probably less than 5%). Most members adhere to traditional, or evangelical forms of Christianity.

The Presbytery meeting itself (usually five times each year) now tends to be more evenly divided on for example, issues of sexuality, but this is mainly because most NESB members do not attend.

This information is provided to help the Board appreciate the dynamics operating within the Presbytery.

## **1.5 Summary of congregational profile**

- \* High number of NESB congregations
  - \* Generally traditional and conservative membership
  - \* Older age profile of Anglo congregations (and this will have clearly increased by the next NCLS survey in 2006)
  - \* Small attendance at worship for more than half the Anglo congregations
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## 2. Needs and Priorities of Older Persons

### 2.1 To remain in their local communities as they age

#### 2.1.1 Focus on their own home

Matters mentioned by local church members as helpful:

- \* Enlisting the services of young people to undertake **household tasks and practical help**.
- \* **Perhaps a boarding link-up service**, where suitable young church members are linked to suitable older church members who can provide accommodation (perhaps in return for some practical assistance).
- \* **Region or Zone based Handy People reference list**: including provision of cleaning services, maintenance and at reasonable rates.  
  
(While it is acknowledged that some local councils, centres and also Home Help provide this service, some people mentioned that it can be more expensive, difficult to obtain when you need or be credited in the first place)  
  
I am aware of the Inner Sydney Home Modification and Maintenance Service, and this could be part of a wider scheme or referral system.
- \* **Cooking Assistance, especially for men**. Given that men are living longer and may outlive or be the carer for their partner, some assistance in terms of course and preparation for men who may have to now do the main cooking in the home.
- \* **Shopping access** – bus services, including liaison with the local council.
- \* **Transport arrangements**: a survey of transport needs and location of bus stops and routes to ensure that older persons benefit from the arrangement. Women in particular mentioned this as it appears that among a certain age group, the man was usually the driver, and in most cases was now deceased.

- \* **Companionship and Visiting**  
Loneliness is recognised as a significant factor in local communities, especially as the number of single person households rises. Co-ordinated community based visiting by adults, and by adults with children could significantly increase the awareness of people of the local church as well as the services provided by the aged care agency. Often the distance from families, and the need for alternate support and contact was raised. For church members, the church is part of their family network.  
(Note: Many older people in the general community and in aged care facilities do not have significant contact with children and babies)
- \* **Trips and Outings.** This also linked in with companionship and visiting. There were two specific requests for help with bus hire or arrangements to enable local church groups to go on outings. Can the Sydney Region Board make available buses (even at nominal hire) for use by local congregations for certain days each month?
- \* **Prayer Based services.** Local churches providing prayer in time of need (I realise privacy matters could be raised).
- \* **Library Services** (local councils usually provide help in this area)
- \* **A Christian library at a local church,**  
or provision of DVDs and tapes at the local library.  
A congregation could apply for use of the RCDF to provide a range of resources in their local library.  
Note: Donation policies should be checked before purchases.
- \* Help with Health  
**Community Nursing** (Blue Care Nursing in Queensland and the Parish connection was highlighted as one clear example)  
  
**Exercise and Recreation Facilities,** such as the Centres for Healthy Ageing were noted as important places to help older people retain their independence and physical well-being. Local church halls will be a key resource for the further development of this in the future. I am aware that the Region is exploring other locations, and the Presbytery could certainly help to advise on possible church halls.  
As a preliminary basis, two or three churches could be chosen (in areas not presently serviced by the Centres), and provided with a ten week program of professional based instruction for gentle exercise (exercises not requiring the set up costs of the Centres for Healthy Ageing.

### **Walking Clubs, Competitions and Bowls**

The possibility of joint clubs, and zone competitions for sports such as bowls and shuffleboard.

### **2.1.2 Focus on Aged Care Facilities**

- \* **Self Care Facilities.** It is likely that in the near future more local church members will desire self care accommodation, particularly if it helps them to remain connected to the local area and their church. Are joint projects possible? Can more and better facilities for older church members be considered, including more appropriate places and locations, especially self-care. Especially helpful would be facilities located closely to present church buildings in some cases.

Some members of self care facilities feel like unpaid staff members who are required to help frailer members in their own facility because there is no one else available. The need to support and care for people in self care units by providing an on-site or near-site contact person is raised as a priority concern, though I am aware of the funding difficulties.

#### **Aged Care Facilities in areas where there is no Uniting Church facility at present.**

It is worth noting that local members in areas such as Mascot, do not have access to facilities in their area that would enable them to continue as a resident in the area. In Mascot, members indicated they would rather recommend people apply to the Sir Joseph Banks home, rather than apply to one of the Sydney Region facilities which would mean greater travel and inconvenience for the resident and their friends and possibly family.

- \* **Better Information Networks and better Trained Staff**  
Having staff who are fully aware of the local facilities, resident needs and also church connections (The DVD mentioned in Point 5.6 would help in this context)
- \* **Music Services**  
Providing relaxation and recreational times, especially with music.
- \* **Entertainment Services**  
Providing a list of, or access to information, about entertainers and speakers who could come to events at local congregations. Many individual facilities now have their own contacts, but a co-ordinated listing which congregations could access would be helpful.
- \* **Transport:** help with transport to appointments, visits, and meetings.

- \* **Need to look at better and safer appliances.**  
Use of electric facilities to encourage continued independence, but also counter lack of opportunity: kettles, toasters.
- \* **Development (or renewing) of Morning and Afternoon tea arrangements:**  
There was concern that these arrangements had ceased in self care and some hostel facilities.
- \* **Provision of hairdressing** at a reasonable cost
- \* **Provision of More Staff**  
There were consistent comments related to the reduction of staffing levels. It was suggested that there was little time for listening and helping in ordinary matters. The desire for more Christian staff was also repeated, with church members with more contact in the aged care facilities indicating that they are not seeing the same level of Christian care and sense of mission
- \* **Australia Post and Deliveries**  
This was a particular issue for The Terraces, and could be addressed by a better located postal address and facility, or provision of a person who could go to Croydon Post Office to collect packages and parcels.
- \* **Friendship Clubs:** More support for church-based friendship clubs.
- \* **Meals for visitors and volunteers**  
A need for greater flexibility in relation to allowing visitors (perhaps nominal charge) and volunteers access to meals, especially at weekends.
- \* **Special Meals and events**  
In one former time, I assisted as a volunteer at one location and each week helped cook and prepare a home based meal for six – seven residents. These times were some of the most special events for the residents, and apart from the stimulating company, the food was usually excellent.
- \* **Chaplains.** While I am aware of the enormous responsibility and time pressure on our chaplains, comment was made that it would be nice to see them more on a casual basis, especially at mealtimes.

## 2.2 Making informed decisions about moving into residential aged care

2.2.1 Given the age of many members, and their connection with people in the older age years, church members provide an excellent starting point for liaison and contact. The Presbytery and the Region could join together for **Zone-based Sydney Region Information Sessions about ageing well**. These could be fun and dynamic seminars, based around Christian views on ageing.

### 2.2.2 Displays

Each church building in the Presbytery area could be provided with a professional display rack containing material related to ageing and services provided by the Region and other services.

This kit would be placed in the most strategic place for the local church, which could be the hall.

The initial cost of the display kits could be considered as a one off use of the RCDF.

Note: It is important that there is a regular update (at least each year) of the information provided.

There should be discussion with the Presbytery about whether it is best to ask local churches first about this arrangement, or just send the material. I believe given the intimate connection of most of our congregations and also support for community services it is possible to send the material directly, but the delivery arrangements may be difficult. Many churches are not open during the week.

An alternate may be to choose a number of congregations which have day to day access and work on these congregations first, expanding after receiving feedback and comment.

### **3. Recommend any services, including pilot programs or further research, which may fill these service provision gaps (as noted in Point 2)**

#### **3.1 Visiting**

**Become a Church Friend** – designated church volunteers

Community Visitation Program based in the local congregations

While this has been undertaken at different times, it would be worth exploring again, perhaps as a trial in certain areas, a program.

*Help the Aged*, an advocacy and support group in England, has long recognised the importance of the local church for older people. The main reasons in their experience have been:

- \* Worship and prayer
- \* Alleviation of loneliness
- \* Spiritual guidance and friendship
- \* Practical assistance. .

In their situation, a church friend becomes the main contact between the organisation and older people. They provide information, visit, give appropriate spiritual help according to the person and practical assistance, perhaps referring the person to specialist groups or service providers. The organisation also produces a special church worship pack designed to help church members' plan services for older people

They also employ a Religious Network Manager to co-ordinate the friend's network.

"All of us in the wider community can play our part by keeping an eye out for our older neighbours during times of need. How many of us enquire as to how these folk are? How many of us are willing to give a few minutes of our time to help them or to do an errand for them?" The Religious Network Manager ([www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk))

#### **Ecumenical Links**

Given the broad range of denominations in the institutions, it would be helpful to develop more contact, perhaps through the local Minister Fellowships, and see if this idea could become an ecumenical activity.

### **3.2 Community Centre and Hall Use – Courses and Programs for the Community**

Many churches have halls which could be utilised more, and connected to community activities.

The Board may consider approving requests through the RCDF for the payment of professional crafts and activities based teachers for a series of programs in local church halls.

#### **Needs of older women and men**

At present many activities are directed to the needs of women.

It would be worth exploring the needs of the community, particularly older men. In some areas, the local shopping centres have a reasonable number of older men who sit in the food court areas or coffee areas whiling away the time. This links in with Point 3.3

#### **Some suggested activities for men:**

- \* Carpentry Workshops
- \* DVD mornings - some good action films
- \* Visits to sporting events, or major shows like the Sydney Motor Show.

### **3.3 Survey of residents**

What do residents expect of the local church or the wider Uniting Church? Given the now well known fact that many residents and users of Uniting Church facilities are not aware of their connection to the Uniting Church, it would be worth considering a professional survey of residents about their ideas, perceptions and possible expectations of the church.

**Proposal:** That the Board contract a professional Christian based organisation to survey clients and residents about matters related to the Uniting Church, the local church and ministries.

### **3.4 A Help Register: Practical Help and Entertainment**

Many of the matters raised in Matter No. 2 relate to the provision of people who can help with practical arrangements. One congregation mentioned that they could use some help in setting up for the presbytery meeting they are hosting in 2006. Many congregations now lack able and willing people to undertake cleaning and church duties at the local congregation. The Region could develop a roster or referral system of recommended tradespeople and professionals, including entertainers, who can be used at aged care facilities, and at congregational activities including leisure clubs and fellowship events.

**Proposal:** That the Board consider revamping volunteer co-ordination arrangements to include operating a centre for information and referrals.

**Note:** This could link in with the suggested One Stop Phone Number

### **3.5 Exercise and Recreation Facilities such as the Centres for Healthy Ageing**

**Proposal:** That the Region liaise with the Presbytery to choose two or three churches (in areas not presently serviced by the Centres), who would be willing to trial a program of professional based instruction for gentle exercise, and consider the possibility of a professional centre developing from the trial.

### **3.6 Zone based Information Sessions about ageing well and Display Arrangements.**

**Proposal:** That the Board:

- a) liaise with the Presbytery in order to develop suitable information seminars for church members and
- b) provide professional displays of material related to ageing and services provided by the Region and other services, and offer these to Presbytery of Sydney congregations through the help of the Presbytery of Sydney office.

### **3.7 One Stop Information Line for Aged Care Matters**

While there is a head office number and numerous facility contact numbers, is it possible to have one number for information and referral about Sydney Region matters as well as the help register noted in 3.4?

**Proposal:** That the Board arrange for a One Stop Sydney Region Aged Care Help Number



#### **4. Services which may assist older people in general who are living within the boundaries of Sydney Region**

*I note as an introduction, the desire of some members for a general noise reduction, and wonder if the Board can help in any campaign to decrease aircraft noise and traffic noise, especially around local churches and aged care facilities. This may be more of a concern for those areas where the aircraft noise insulation project was limited, but helping to provide environments of reasonable quiet can aid lifestyle and develop a sense of peace.*

##### **4.1 Home Care**

I believe one helpful service could be a simple and clear explanatory pamphlet about Home Care and its availability. These pamphlets could be made available in strategic church locations and community venues. Pamphlets in languages such as Tongan, Fijian and Korean would be especially helpful.

##### **4.2 Centres for Healthy Ageing**

Already the centres have been winning support and enthusiasm. The locations are reasonable, and also link in with past local church ministry areas.

##### **4.3 Publish short guides, posters, displays and a calendar**

Posters could be displayed in churches, community halls, and also local shopping areas, RSLs, and other locations. The logo and website of the Sydney Regional Aged Care Network could be prominent and also information details about the local churches.

##### **Calendar**

For example, a Top Twelve Guide or short helpful hints to promote healthier living could be developed as a poster or incorporated into a Regional Aged Care Calendar, which could have photos of facilities as well as active older people undertaking fun activities and long-serving staff.

The RCDF could be used to develop and produce a calendar.

## A SYDNEY REGION AGED CARE POSTER

(Photos from the latest ball) and ....

An example is **The Top Ten Tips from Help the Aged** (26/07/2004)

*Here's a quick summary of how to age well! Think about your lifestyle and what you can do to give added life to your years.*

1. *Take more exercise. Studies have shown that 'exercise deficiency syndrome' is the biggest risk we face as we get older.*
2. *Give up smoking.*
3. *Keep socially and mentally active. Having a strong network of family and friends and a range of activities is vital to your health.*
4. *Drink more water. Many of us are slightly dehydrated.*
5. *Get outdoors as often as possible. For exercise and because exposure to light - especially sunshine - is vital for our body clocks and vitamin D levels.*
6. *Eat lots more fruit and vegetables.*
7. *If you drink alcohol - little and often will do you the most good!*
8. *Make your home safe.*
9. *See your GP when you are not well.*
10. *Be positive. This gives us a rosier view of life, and boosts our immune system as well. Every day, spend 20 minutes focused on a really uplifting thought or memory - you will feel better and your immune system will get a boost*

*<http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/Health/HealthyAgeing/Ageingwell/default.htm>*

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## **5. Strategies that will strengthen the relationships between the Region and Sydney Presbytery and its congregations.**

### **Introduction**

One of the consistent themes arising during the discussions was a feeling of disempowerment and disconnection with the aged care ministry of the church. This has mainly arisen from the experience of many local members of the way the new aged care arrangements came into being. It is difficult to state this without highlighting the significant and continuing high level of antagonism with the present arrangement. Building new relationships was regarded with suspicion, irony, and incredulity. Having said that, forgiveness was also a hallmark for some people and a desire to see what good could be arranged from the situation which was now established.

### **Financial allocations**

I have included an outline of possible expenses or costs for various projects. This is based on using 75% of the allocated RCDF each year for specific projects (approximately \$50 000) and allowing 25% for congregational projects through an application system (approximately \$20 000).

## **5.1 Contact with Pacific Islander congregations**

The region has a mostly untapped resource of volunteers in its migrant-ethnic churches. I have decided to focus on Pacific Islanders because the majority of the NESB congregations are Islander: Tongan, Fijian, Rotuman and Samoan. People from the Pacific Islands have a love of service and ministry, especially with older people who are accorded a special place. This would also link with the hoped for recommendation of having more Christians and church members working in aged care organisations.

### **5.1.1 Recruitment for volunteer work**

A part-time volunteer co-ordinator for Pacific Island congregations could be appointed: Three days per week for an initial three year period. This would require Sunday work and liaison with congregations.

**Budget:** \$30 000

### 5.1.2 Possible training courses for employment in Aged Care work

Advertising through selected local churches could be undertaken to encourage church members to consider a career in aged care work. This could be complimented by visits to certain congregations and seminars to explore possible employment options. I also believe this could help the volunteer base. Becoming a volunteer in the aged care network is an excellent way to gain experience, which would be looked upon favorably by the employer.

### 5.1.3 The Sydney Region Pacific Islands Choir Competition

The younger generations are usually more fluent in English (most are born in Australia now) and often sing in English as their preferred language. Each year, a choir competition could be arranged for Pacific Island congregational members of the Presbytery (this is one case where the congregations outside the technical bounds of the Presbytery). I suggest that the organisation of this competition would be part of the part-time volunteer co-ordinator's duties.

**Categories:** I suggest three categories:

- \* Children (under 19 years)
- \* Youth (19 – 35 years)
- \* All Age

**Location of the Events:** Each category would be staged at one of the aged care locations in the Region, and local residents and interested people would be invited to attend. This could be held on a Saturday or Sunday.

**Timing of the events.**

The competition could be linked to Christmas and become part of a carol singing outreach program as well. Choirs could sing in the residential facilities and also tour around the immediate local area, raising awareness of the church, and the mission of aged care.

**Judging:** The Presbytery could be asked to help provide judges, or the Board could liaise with other choir competitions in order to obtain the services of judges.

**Prize Money:** I believe it would be suitable to make a reasonable contribution as there will be significant expenses involved with uniforms, travel, and training.

\$2500 per category, with prize money paid to the choir's local congregation.

(\$7 500 per annum) Other expenses, including honorariums, certificates:

\$500.00. **Total Budget:** \$8 000

## 5.2 The Sydney Region Aged Care Lecture Series and Volunteer Recognition : An Educational Focus

There is a need to highlight the work of aged care and our congregations in a formal and academic way, as well as providing an opportunity to formally recognise volunteers at appropriate times. Internal (within the UCA) and external speakers could be contracted to provide an annual lecture as a special event in a local congregation.

*The Centre for Policy on Ageing* (in England) was established in 1947 by the Nuffield Foundation to consider the needs of, and help older people. Originally called the National Corporation for the Care of Old People, the name change in 1980 came when the organisation moved from a grant based group to a policy-oriented agency. Today, the work of CPA is information based. The CPA influences service providers, and advocates for what older people themselves want and need. I believe a worthwhile use of the RDF could be education linked to research and information, especially in the form of a series of lectures.

- 5.2.1 Proposal:** That the Board liaise with the suggested congregations concerning the recommended Four Key Annual Lectures.

**Leichhardt:** *Leichhardt Wesley*

**Suggested Name:** The LUCAN Lecture

**Focus:** *Pastoral Care and Christian Faith in Action*

**Burwood Croydon:** *Burwood, North Croydon and Malvern Hill*

**Suggested Name:** The Woodfield Lecture

**Focus:** *Aged Care in a Multicultural Society*

**Bondi Junction:** *Church in the Market Place*

**Suggested Name:** The EDINA or MarketPlace Lecture

**Focus:** *Aged Care for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**St Stephen's Uniting Church, Macquarie Street.**

**Suggested Name:** The Sydney Region Aged Care Lecture

**Focus:** *Academic Research and Development, and Government Policy in Aged Care*

Each lecture would preferably be held on a Sunday, but this would need to be negotiated with the local congregation.

A night is recommended for Leichhardt and St Stephen's,

An afternoon is recommended for Burwood and Bondi Junction.

The Fund would provide for all costs to be met, including speakers, and supper. It is recommended that professional catering be included in the arrangements, to help alleviate any burden on local catering arrangements.

The Region would liaise with the Presbytery and relevant congregation about the logistical arrangements.

**Budget:** \$2000 per lecture (\$8 000 per annum)

### **5.2.2. Recognition of Local Volunteers**

The three suburban lectures (and possibly the City lecture) would also provide a more defined opportunity to formally recognise local volunteers and provide a suitable achievement recognition.

I envisage that one person would be proposed each year to receive a significant mention and award.

This could be a Dinner Voucher for the volunteer and family at a local restaurant; a weekend away. It is possible that a local business may donate their services, but this would also imply some contra advertising.

**Budget:** \$250 per volunteer (up to \$1000 per annum)

**Total Budget for the seminars and lectures: \$9 000**

## **5.3 Chaplaincy and Congregational Links**

While the staff chaplains have good connections with some local congregations, and at least two have their membership in a Presbytery of Sydney congregation, I believe that it would be helpful for the board and chaplains, and certain local congregations to consider having a more intentional link. At present it appears the arrangements are based more around 'filling in' when the minister is away, while I perceive it may be better for the chaplains to take services when the local minister is also there and to liaise about common ministry issues and mutual support.

While a number of congregations could be considered, I believe the priority should be directed to those congregations which previously had a close connection to aged care work. A more intentional support and liaison may also help to consolidate the arrangements and help provided in the facilities by some local ministers on an occasional or regular basis, including support when the chaplains are on leave. There could be mutual involvement in special worship or civil services of significance for Australia or the Uniting Church. Key days in Australia would be Australia day and Anzac Day.

- 5.3.1 Proposal:** That the chaplains consult with the congregations of CMP, Burwood-Croydon and Leichhardt, and other agreed congregations concerning opportunities to preach at services and highlight the pastoral ministry of the Aged Care Network.

#### **5.4 A more intentional Christian focus and connection to the local church**

The possibility of joint bible studies (organised by the congregations and chaplains) and more intentional Christian outreach based activities were raised. Is it possible to have an introduction to Christianity course, such as Alpha at one of the locations? Key local congregations may be able to supply the leaders and practical help. If there is interest in this or a similar type of exploratory group, it could also lead to a series of seminars, bible studies or groups, which allow a broader contact with the local congregations and interaction with a wider range of members.

- 5.4.1 Proposal:** That the chaplains consult with the ministers of CMP, Burwood-Croydon and Leichhardt, and other agreed congregations concerning opportunities for joint bible study and outreach activities.

#### **5.5 Connection with a local fete and area Festival**

For some time the Homes had a significant involvement in the Leichhardt Festa. Each area now has a significant community festival and the opportunity to promote the work of aged care along with the local church should be explored.

Local church volunteers could help to staff the stall, but this would probably require a part-time employee (or substantial involvement for the volunteer co-ordinator).

The main festival areas that have been mentioned to me are:

**Bondi Junction** (Possibly kite related activities at the Festival of the Winds – September)

**Burwood Festival** (September)

**Haberfield**

**Leichhardt** (March)

**Marrickville** (September)

There would be other smaller opportunities as well, and indeed the Woodfield Auxiliary already links in with Ashfield community events. These events would provide a visible sign that the local church and aged care ministry are part of the one mission and ministry.

- 5.5.1 Proposal:** That the Board discuss with the Presbytery and local congregations the possibility of joint involvement in local festivals for an initial trial during 2006.

## **5.6 Information and Training Times for New Staff**

I acknowledge that some aged care facilities have run courses in the past. Coolamon College has a distance education programme designed for new staff as an orientation to the UCA. It is difficult to see this being undertaken by many ordinary employees. It would be helpful to involve the Chaplains, local ministers, especially those from the nearby residential facilities, and local church members (including past members of the local boards), in this series and encourage a closer connection of new staff and local church members, as the relationship between word and deed and the ministry and mission of the Uniting Church are explained.

The best way for this to be undertaken would be on a zone basis.

I also suggest that the Board request Uniting Ageing NSW & ACT to negotiate with the NSW Synod Church Historical Society and obtain the right to produce a **small information booklet** with the following article (perhaps updated)

Geoffrey Barnes, 1989,

'The Role of the Church in Aged Care - An Australian Perspective',  
*Church Heritage*, Vol. 6, No.1, pp. 18 - 30.

### **DVD of the Sydney Region**

It would be helpful to have a DVD of the work of the Region, the different facilities and also local congregations. This could be an expensive project, and I suggest an alternative, asking one of the younger groups of local church members to undertake this project (one possibility is Burwood Evening Congregation). This would be a helpful resource for staff, local church members and also the wider community.

- 5.6.1 Proposal:** That the Board consider introducing new short information sessions based around a morning or afternoon for new staff with involvement of the people and groups mentioned in 5.6, and provide suitable information resources.



- 5.6.2 Proposal:** That the Board considering approaching the Burwood Evening Congregation with a request that the members consider producing a DVD of the ministry of the Sydney Region Aged Care and Congregational Network

Note: all set up costs and expenses would need to be reimbursed.

## **5.7 Auxiliary Help and Development**

Auxiliary fellowships continue in some places through our aged care network to provide excellent support and help, raising much needed funds.

There needs to be greater support and a new effort to re-establish an auxiliary where they have ceased to operate. For the future, it would be helpful to consider Zone based auxiliary organisations, much like the Woodfield Auxiliary operates now, but attempting to draw in members from other congregations in the Zone.

- Proposal:** That the Aged Care Board consider matching the amount of money raised by each auxiliary for allocation as that auxiliary determines, up to .. Per annum.

## **5.8 Promotion of Congregational Activities of Special Events**

Many congregations hold excellent seminars, theme nights and special concerts, which may appeal to staff or residents. It would be helpful to consider ways the Region could support the promotion of these events (and perhaps cross promotion of certain aged care events), including internal newsletters and e-mail networks.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Sydney Regional Aged Care Board and the Presbytery of Sydney, and its congregations have an opportunity to begin to develop a new relationship. It comes at a time when the age of many members is making them more aware of the issues of aged care, and the need to age well. Mutual support, and also development of new contacts and groups, particularly through education, training and wider pastoral care will help the local congregations to realise that the ministry of the Sydney Regional Aged Care Network is a ministry worthy of encouragement, prayer and development as a renewed call to service.

**APPENDIX A      DRAFT: 20 October 2005:**  
**A POLICY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS**  
**for the Regional Care Development Fund (RCDF)**

1.      The Sydney Region Aged Care Board is the sole decision maker with regard to the RCDF . (Note: The Board is the Sydney Region Aged Care Board)
2.      The Board may choose to consult with the Presbytery of Sydney through the Presbytery Officers or the Presbytery Standing Committee.
3.      **Allocation of Funds**
  - 3.1      Seventy Five percent of the funds available each year will be allocated by the Board on the basis of agreed and continuing or established projects and priorities.
  - 3.2      Twenty five percent of the funds available each year are to be made available for special projects undertaken by member congregations within the regional bounds of the Sydney Region for Aged Care.
4.      **Congregational Applications**
  - 4.1      Congregations are invited to apply for funding for one-off or special projects each year.
  - 4.2      Applications must be approved by the relevant Church Council.
  - 4.3      Applicants must provide:
    - a)      a full description of the project;
    - b)      detail about the oversight of the project
    - c)      a copy of the Congregation's latest Synod Financial return
  - 4.4      All applicants must agree to provide a short written report to the Board, including a comment or evaluation about the project after the project's conclusion.
5.      The Board reserves the right to approve all, some or none of any of the applications received, and has full discretion in the allocation of any funds not used for special congregational projects in any one year, provided it is in accordance with the spirit of the RCDF..
6.      The closing date for applications is 31 March of each year, with funds to be provided to successful applicants for the ensuing financial year.