

EASTLAND REGIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT FOR YEAR 2012-1013

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. Anglicans remain the 'go-to' church in most local situations of need, although we face the same issues of secularisation and marginalisation as in the rest of New Zealand – a challenging context!

The hosting of regional conference in July 2012 at Wairoa was an opportunity to connect with the southern part of Eastland region. Spending the morning at Taihoa Marae and visiting the site of James Hamlin's mission and later church building gave an insight into our early, and often forgotten history.

As a region we work alongside three rohe within Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Tairāwhiti. With Archbishop Brown Turei based in Gisborne, this means cross-tikanga co-operation and a sharing of resources is essential, although how this is expressed varies from parish to parish. These include; shared congregational life at Tolaga Bay and points north, regular use of St Nicholas' Church Wainui by a tikanga Maori congregation, combined services on 5th Sundays on the Poverty Bay flats and at Wairoa (pictured), and planning for the upcoming Three Tikanga Youth Pilgrimage to be held within Ngati Porou rohe in early October. Further opportunities are available but require intentionality or slip by in the busyness of regular mission and ministry.

Youth work remains strong within the region, despite many younger people going away for tertiary education and work. At Top Parish Eastland punches above its weight, with teams attending from three Eastland parishes and were successful again in bringing home trophies. The resignation of Rev'd Frank Ngatoro in April to take up youth counselling work with Turanga Social Services is a real blow, but the region and diocesan youth ministries are taking the opportunity to reassess the youth facilitator position to best match the needs of this region.

Completion of renovations at Te Hapara Whanau Aroha Centre in late 2012 give the early childhood centre room for 50 children. The co-operation between the three social services on the Childers Road site is a significant hub for the region, and is supported by other parishes, particularly Waipaoa. Monthly meetings of Friends of Te Hapara include the vicar, bishop's chaplain and senior staff from ECE, social work and Growing through Grief, and provide a good interface between social services, the parish and region.

The review of Waiapu Anglican Social Services has provided an opportunity for clergy and laity to increase their knowledge of what is operated within the region, and look at the theological and ecclesial underpinning of this part of the Church's mission. The review has been very unsettling for the staff directly involved, and I compliment them on their dedication and commitment through difficult times.

The appointment of the Rev'd Petra Barber as vicar of Gisborne-Te Hapara, and the extension of my role as missionary to East Coast parish to include that of Bishop's Chaplain for Eastland (and subsequent relocation to Gisborne), both in February 2013, means we now have three full-time stipendiary clergy in the region again. Petra's arrival was a great boost for the parish, who have had two long vacancies in the last five years.

We have valued the input of the Rev'd Adrienne Bruce, who combined Bishop's chaplain responsibilities across Eastland and Bay of Plenty from her Opotiki base. We realise this was a huge load to carry and wish her well as she concentrates on just one region again, alongside her other diocesan and national church involvement.

Monthly meetings of regional executive gather personnel from all parishes except Wairoa, and provide a regular catchup and exchange of ideas. However membership is heavily weighted with clergy, and we would appreciate more lay involvement in this key co-ordinating group, and also another person to chair our meetings now that I am bishop's chaplain. With our staffing is more stable we need to plan a broad strategy for mission and ministry across the region so we can be more responsive for the future.

Ma te Atua koutou e manaaki

Stephen Donald (Rev'd) - chairman