

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



PARISH OF
ROBINA
MERMAID BEACH



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Agenda

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Parish will be held on Saturday 24th February 2024 at 4:00pm.

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. 2023: A Look at the Past Year**
 1. Senior Minister's Report
 2. Churchwardens' Report
 3. Treasurer's Report on 2023 and budget for 2024 (adopted)

Motion: This meeting receives the report on 2023 and accepts the accounts published therein.

- 3. Parish Council Elections**
 - Wardens
 - Parish Councillors
 - Nominators
 - Synod Representatives
- 4. Other Business**

(At least 3 days notice must be given before the meeting if such matters are to be considered)
- 5. Confirmation of Minutes (unless delegated to Parish Council)**
- 6. Final Blessing**

Senior Minister

2023 was the year we became “brave for the benefit of others”. This narrative statement has begun to take hold of our community in many powerful ways. Our regional bishop John Roundhill has told me on a number of occasions that he proudly shares this statement about our church identity with others he encounters. It is indeed an identity narrative that we are growing and living into and while it is taking hold it will continue to remain a goal for coming years.

This identity narrative is already shaping and impacting our community and perhaps the most noticeable way has been the release of Mary-Anne Rulfs to the Anglican community in Palm Beach and Southern Gold Coast. Mary-Anne has not left us, rather our intention is to go with her prayerfully and practically as we forge new relationships and connections and as we explore what it might look like to be a church with intentional relationships with both Palm Beach and Burleigh Heads Anglican Church. The parish priest from Burleigh Heads and I have known each other for well over 20 years and it's been joy to build a strong relationship between him, Mary-Anne and myself as we continue to journey together.

It would be impossible to acknowledge all the work that goes into the life of our church and to thank each person but I've provided some comments and information on some key areas of church life for 2023 below.

Governance, Vision & Planning

Our Parish Council has met both in person and via Zoom throughout the year and have been a vital part of the governance and leadership process of our church. Their collective insight and wisdom is extraordinary and they continue to be a vital part of the smooth operations of our church. This year we welcomed Marina Ebert into a group that had a collective wealth of experience on Parish Council. The splash of a new voice into an experienced group has been well received by all and increased our effectiveness.

I meet with our 3 wardens regularly throughout the year, specifically when there are some bigger issues and/or decisions to resolve. The wardens had early awareness and input of the potential for Mary-Anne to step in as locum priest at Palm Beach and their input and continued support has been invaluable.

The combination of wardens, parish council and staff lead to the adoption of our parish narrative statement: [Brave for the benefit of others](#) and Parish Council has used this as an evaluation tool for decision making throughout the year.

Financial Stewardship

As is reflected in the Treasurer's Report, the financial health of the parish was a key focus area for 2023 and we continue to be quite fragile and vulnerable financially. We have historically relied on the “business operations” of the parish which have included Op Shops, Child Care and making spaces available to other organisations which has included Anglicare. The key area of financial stress has been Riverwalk Early Learning Centre which has not contributed to the financial wellbeing of the parish since the pandemic (please refer below for further detail). It does however highlight our need to pay attention to the giving and stewardship of our worshipping communities which while never historically covering the ministry cost of the parish really should be working towards achieving that goal.

I would encourage every member of our parish to prayerfully consider their financial giving to the parish while continuing to recognise we are called to give and serve in many more ways other than financially.

Staff and Clergy

We are blessed as a church and I am humbled to lead such a cohesive, supportive and generous team which is made up of Mary-Anne, Andrea, Anne, Bowen, Jackson, Sini and myself. We also work very closely with Lisa (Centre Director) and Cathy (Centre Administration) from Riverwalk Early Learning Centre as well as the interns. Much of their work is unnoticed and unrecognised but let me assure you that they are diligent, intentional and impactful in the life of our church and the wider community.

In the later part of this year our beloved retired priest Elroy suffered a post-operative stroke and has not been able to contribute to the worshipping and community life of our church since. She is dearly missed and we are praying earnestly for a full recovery and look forward in anticipation to her rejoining as a valuable part of our team.

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Mother Ann McGuinness (School Chaplain at All Saints Anglican School) is particularly active in the life of our 9:30am congregation both in a priestly role as well as being a valuable and active parishioner. I am thankful for 10 years of friendship as we've worked alongside each other as well as supported each other in our respective roles.

Together we endeavour to model what it means to be brave for the benefit of others.

Internship Program

Our interns for 2023 were Sidney Young, Gia Lowry, Abbie Rynehart (1st half of the year), Elena Del Villar and Anika Perry who involve themselves in a varied range of church activities. Their creativity, enthusiasm, willingness & generosity is such a blessing to our church and we are privileged to be able to be a small part of their development as extraordinary young people in the life of the church.

We are in the process of finalising interns for 2024 but it looks like we will be welcoming an exciting number of young men and women graduating from schools including All Saints Anglican School, Kings Christian College and Robina High. I look forward to seeing how these young people continue to influence and shape our church as well as being influenced and shaped by our church community.

Young Adults Program

Our Young Adults group continues to meet on a Monday night and is not only part of the development of our interns but also includes other young adults for bible study, topical discussions and most importantly developing relationship and friendship. This group has a shared leadership between Mary-Anne Rulfs, Eron Perry (from Burleigh Heads Anglican) and myself.

Riverwalk ELC

It has been an incredibly challenging year for our Early Learning Centre which officially re-branded from Rainbow Town to Riverwalk Early Learning Centre. With the departure of long-term director Catriona MacGregor to take up a Diocesan role with the Anglican Schools Commission a replacement director was employed however this was only short-lived as she took up a role in a private school after 3 months. During that time an aggressive new competitor entered Robina whose director had been a previous staff member at our centre. The result of this was to head hunt a number of key staff and some families to their new centre. This placed enormous pressure on us in terms of both finances and morale.

We were blessed to be able to find an exceptional director in Lisa Martin who has hit the ground running and not only stabilised morale but has made significant in-roads into stabilising the long-term future of the centre.

I want to particularly acknowledge the work of our Business Manager Andrea Benham during the time following the sudden resignation of the Centre Director and prior and following Lisa's appointment. Without her effort and tenacity in following through some key issues we may not have been able to keep the centre open. While we did get some key support from the Anglican Schools Commission particularly in the recruitment process for Lisa, we continue to be somewhat disappointed with the overall support both available and offered at a Diocesan level.

The management committee were excited to add a new member to the group who is a parent of 2 children currently at the centre. Sarah Hands is the wife of the Lead Pastor of New Life Church and has offered some valuable insight as well as her skills in marketing and communication. Thank you to Paul Bevan and David Garside who join me and Andrea on the management committee especially during such a challenging year.

I have every confidence that the tide not only is turning but has turned and anticipate a very different update in the 2024 annual Report.

Trinity Family Support Network (TFSN)

TFSN is a government funded program which focuses on early intervention for before school aged children and their families. TFSN acts as "hub" between families and other services and regularly makes referrals and connections with families in need. We have been advised that this program has been re-funded so it will be a privilege to be able to continue to deliver this vital program that is community and needs facing.

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Bowen Miller leads this program incredibly effectively with the support of Anne Tattam and a small group of volunteers, the other members of the ministry team are also available when and where needed. We have a great relationship with other agencies in this area and I know Bowen works very hard to maintain and develop these relationships.

Bowen has been actively involved in an ecumenical think-tank to try and see how the churches could work together to respond to times of disaster & this was mobilised at the end of 2023 and into early 2024 with the impact of the storms on the Gold Coast around Christmas and New Year.

Our Friday morning playgroup program (which is part of our TFSN program) continues to be an incredible success and is spoken of highly within the community. Church & Riverwalk staff are actively involved in this as is a small team of exceptional volunteers.

Worshipping Life

The worshipping life of our parish is innovative, vibrant and diverse. Our weekly services on Wednesdays and Sundays are continuing to slowly grow which is incredibly encouraging. When you also include the numbers of people who are engaging in online content both at the time of the services and later in the week our numbers engaging in weekly worship are amongst the highest in the diocese.

We have continued Beach Church and Evensong as “seasonal” services, both of which have been effective in connecting and worshipping in different ways to our regular weekly services.

We will continue to strive for excellence in our worship delivery, diversity and substance in our styles of worship.

While Mary-Anne and I are the most visible and identifiable leaders and enablers of worship, we are so blessed to have the willingness of incredibly gifted and talented musicians, Liturgical Assistants, intercessors, readers, flower arrangers, baristas, welcomers, sacristans and technology operators who make our worshipping life not only possible but deep, meaningful and effective.

In 2023 we began to re-establish Nursing Home ministry following a pause caused by Covid-19 restrictions. Mary-Anne and Anne have been the primary liaison with care organisations and I am excited that a number of church members have expressed interest and begun to serve in these places.

As we move into 2024 we will notice some significant changes in the pattern of leading our services with Mary-Anne initially less available for leading weekly worship at Robina due to commitments at Palm Beach, she does however remain actively involved in the planning, innovation and delivery of the worshipping life of our church community.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care continues to be a significant priority. Members of our staff team meet weekly and discuss pastoral needs and endeavour to provide a conduit of care and connection across our church and beyond.

There have again been some deaths of significant church members throughout the year and one of the sadnesses of long-term ministry is that we see many of our saints pass on to eternal life which has impact across our community.

Community Connect has been particularly impactful in both internal and external pastoral care. Mary-Anne's leadership in this innovation has continued to bear much fruit. I look forward to seeing this continue to flourish in 2024.

While our staff and myself are very focused on Pastoral Care, we do so with the knowledge that it is the members of the church family caring for each other that have the most impact. Our staff merely hope to facilitate, support and cheer you on in this vital part of church life in which every member has a part to play.

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Youth & Children's Ministry

Our small but active Youth Group was lead by Jackson King and Anika Perry throughout 2023 with only the very occasional input and influence from parish clergy and other young adults and interns.

This is a growing group who meet on Thursday nights with many of its members involved in other parts of church life but with some for whom Thursday nights are the only connection with our church. The age range is year 7 to 12.

Our ministry with children has been consistently offered each week throughout 2023 despite the continued slow return to gathered worship by many young families following the pandemic. There is slow growth in this area and while week to week numbers continue to fluctuate wildly, we are blessed to be able to offer this ministry consistently thanks to the volunteers and interns who support, organise and lead this ministry.

Effective and impactful ways to connect and re-connect with children and young families continues to be a key priority for 2024.

Op Shops

In 2023 we appointed Sini Sivanandan full time to help with the co-ordination and leadership of our 2 Op Shops as well as the Thrift Shop at Burleigh Heads Anglican Church. This has been a critical appointment and I feel blessed to have been able to appoint someone as capable as Sini. It is however an enormous task as well as being a brand new role. Both your prayerful and practical help in this critical area of parish mission and ministry is very appreciated. Both Mary-Anne and myself are actively involved in supporting Sini and the volunteer teams.

We have such an amazing team of volunteers from our church and the wider community and I thank God for their amazing ministry! Sini has prepared a report which I will include as an appendix to this report for your information.

Small Groups

We have a number of small groups, bible studies, prayer and interest groups that meet together in various locations, times and ways. There are also many informal gatherings that occur and meet from time to time which equally build relationship, encouragement, support and spiritual growth and maturity.

Mary-Anne and I create bible study resources and discussion questions which are published on the resources page of our website each week which complement the Sunday sermons. Some small groups use this as their primary resource while they are also able to be used for personal reflection.

The intentional gatherings targeted at the women of our parish which began in 2021 has continued to gain momentum throughout 2023 which compliments our long running and effective Men's Breakfast group.

Leanne and I are personally involved in a small group of church members that meets on a fortnightly basis. Small groups and bible studies are the heartbeat of every growing church and our continued support, participation in and encouragement of small groups is critical to both the growth, rebuilding and maturity of our community. I am incredibly grateful for those who organise, resource, coordinate and lead small groups. I have had a long-term hope that every member of our church community would connect to at least one small group outside of Sunday worship.

Our ministry team is always happy to resource, support and seed new groups within our church and so if you are interested in joining or starting one please let us know.

Missions

We continue to support our mission partners and individual parishioners give to and support practically numerous mission organisations.

We continued our strong connection with Burleigh Heads Parish in their provision of support to those in need and continue to resource their needs throughout 2023.

Many of our other church activities have included but are not limited to Kids Hope, Religious Instruction in Schools, Community Connect, Nursing Home Ministry, our relationship with Anglicare, Op Shops and TFSN have a strong missional focus which is so important to retain an outward looking focus as a church.

AGM

Regional and Diocesan involvement

Involvement in the life of the Diocese is a requirement of our licenses as priests but also important for the connection of our church to the wider Anglican Church. It is equally important for us as a church to be represented on a Gold Coast regional level with other churches and church based organisations.

I sit on the Finance and Diocesan Services Commission, am an Honorary Canon of the Cathedral, Area Dean and sit on the school Council for All Saints Anglican School. Mary-Anne sits on the Anglican Schools Commission as well as being the chair of council for Coomera Anglican College.

Our church is widely respected across the diocese and it is humbling to feel we are able to contribute personally to the good functioning of the Anglican Church in South East Queensland.

Towards the end of the year I was also appointed chairman for the Gold Coast Church Leaders Round Table Steering Team. This group has a long title but in simple terms, is a group that tries to get leaders of Christian churches across the Gold Coast and their congregations to work together.

Resource Church

Along with the Cathedral and St Bart's Toowoomba we are one of 3 remaining "Resource Churches" in the diocese. The intention of a Resource Church is to both provide specialty support to other churches as well as being an example of creative and innovative ways to be church in today's world.

While our specialty areas are: Young Adults Ministry and Internship Program; Digital Ministry and Community Engagement, the most common way we are called upon to resource and support other churches is with Financial and Administrative support.

Our principal focus area for 2023 has been the development and operationalisation of the relationship between Burleigh Heads and Palm Beach parishes.

2024

Part of being brave for the benefit of others is considering how we might be church in our current worldview which is becoming increasingly secular. If this last Christmas is any indicator we are now very much in a reality where the vast majority of the community outside our regular members, many of whom still identify themselves as Anglicans on the Census, feel a decreasing compulsion to connect with the worshiping life of their local Anglican Church, including ours.

To just continue as we have will only result in declining numbers similar to those experienced by other Anglican churches across the diocese and the nation. We must be prepared that part of being brave will have to look like trying new and different things, even when those things might mean we may have to forgo or change the things we have found meaningful in the past or built a sentimentality about.

I have now had the privilege of serving you in this community for more than 10 years. I believe the best is yet to come, but I also have a strong conviction that it will take a fair bit of wrestling, experimenting and a whole lot of bravery. As long as we are attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, I have no doubt God will lead us into this new season as a church community with hope and purpose.

Blessings

Rev'd Stewart Perry
Senior Minister

Church Warden

Written by Mr Stephen Wruck.

A legacy of the Covid years seems to be that our society is less connected and more uncertain. Things that were once certain are now questioned. Practices that were taken for granted stopped and are slow to restart, or have been replaced.

Our church has not been immune. People who served as volunteers pre-covid may be finding it hard to return. Some families who regularly attended church on Sundays may not have returned. Some have become used to attending online. Others formed new habits, and are slowly drifting back to church.

2023 was a year when we reassessed what we do. We understood that things are not as they were before, and we needed to make changes to adjust to the new reality. We understood that we need to be brave for the benefit of others.

As we go through this period, there are good indicators of an exciting future for our church.

We have a solid group of young adults who are committed and growing in their faith. Our intern program for the coming year is looking very promising.

We continue to have conversations with nearby Anglican churches. We are working more closely with Burleigh and Palm Beach parishes. We don't know where that will take us, but working together for God's purposes is a good foundation.

We appointed Sini Sivanandan to a new position as Op Shop coordinator. A consequence was opening the Makeri St Op Shop an extra day per week - allowing us to serve more people in our community for more days.

Lisa Martin is our new Director of Riverwalk Early Learning Centre. Riverwalk succeeding as a missional outreach and succeeding financially is critical to us as a church. There is still some way to go, but there are signs that Riverwalk is moving in the right direction.

New people are arriving, and our service attendance is growing.

We are not sure where this journey is leading us - God has a habit of saying 'GO' without defining where to beyond the next step or two.

We do know though, that there are many opportunities to serve in the life of our church as we step out and be brave for the benefit of others.

Mr Stephen Wruck (Rector's Warden)
Mrs Linda Hardstaff (Warden)
Mr Todd Harm (Warden)

Finance

Finance Report

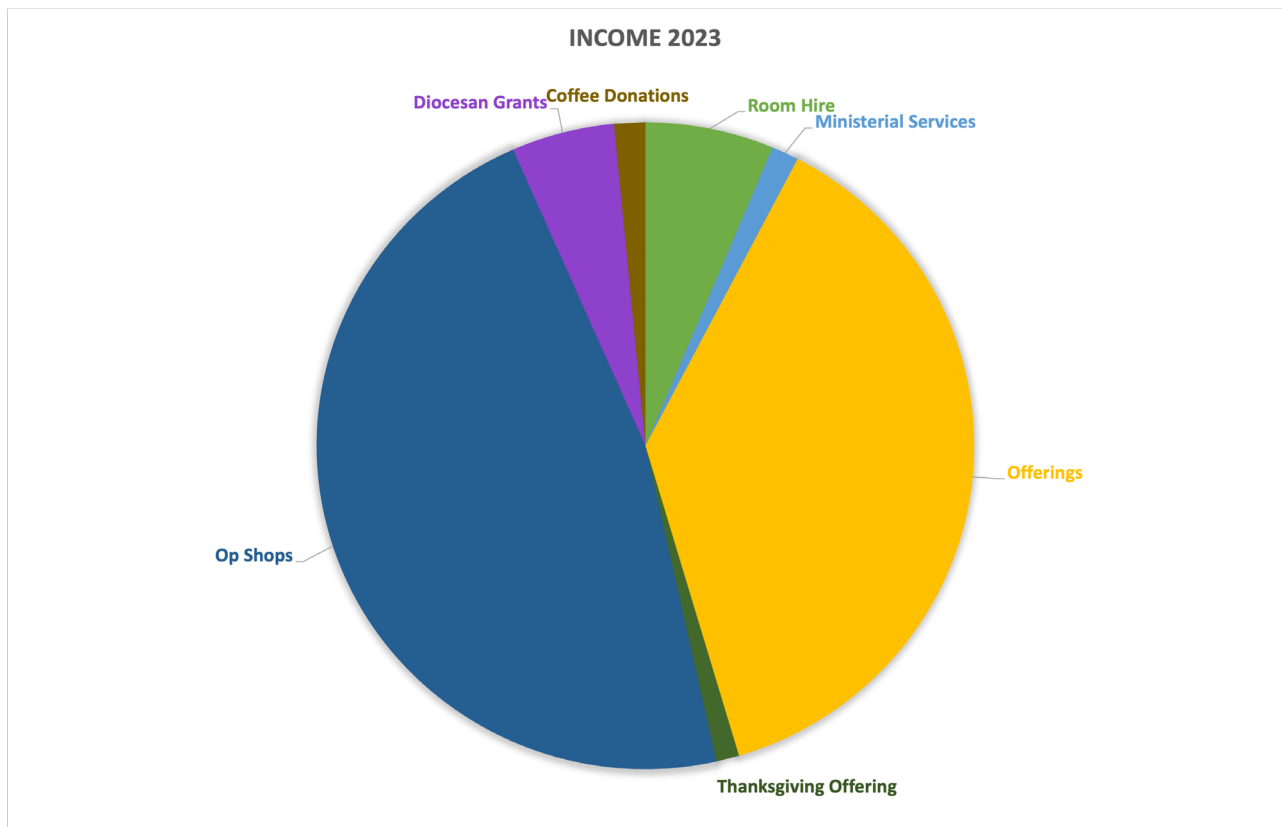
The past twelve months were again challenging from a financial perspective. Last year I mentioned that maintaining adequate cash flow would be a major focus for the first part of the year - this was certainly true and unfortunately is still a major concern.

At the time of writing this report, we are still waiting on final figures from the auditors so I'm unable to give an accurate profit or loss figure for 2023 or provide audited Financial Statements for either entity.

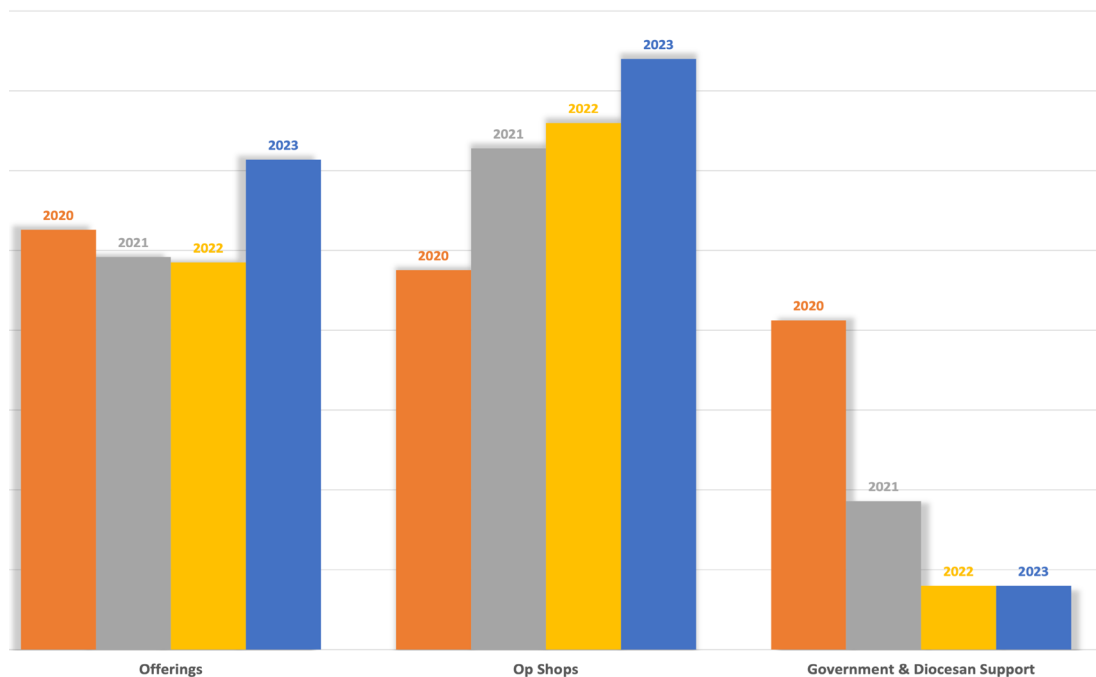
Income

Continuing on from the trends of the past few years, our offertory giving was mainly via electronic means such as direct debit, direct deposit and credit cards. Pleasingly, due to our thanksgiving offering, giving increased in 2023. Our Op Shops again increased their takings, providing a stable and much needed income stream. Opening the Markeri Street Op Shop on a Monday has had a very positive, and much needed, affect on our cashflow. Riverwalk Robina Early Learning Centre (previously Rainbow Town) had a tumultuous year, with multiple staff and children leaving the centre. Thankfully, the new director appointed mid-year has had an immediate impact with increasing fees, occupancy and staff retention. They are still recovering from the resulting cash flow consequences, and again were not able to contribute in 2023.

The first graph below shows our main income sources for the 2023 financial year, while the second graph looks at our changing income sources.



INCOME COMPARISON



Expenses

The Church's expenditure remains relatively stable each year, however 2023 again saw a higher than usual expenditure on repairs and maintenance (mainly due to fixing water leaks). As seen in the graph on the next page, staff and ministerial salaries continue to be our largest expense. Administration expenses include printing, stationery, and telephone. Occupancy expenses include cleaning, insurance, rates, electricity and waste removal.

Loans

The rising interest rates have continued to have an effect on cash flow. The balance of our loan as at 31 December is \$779,056.

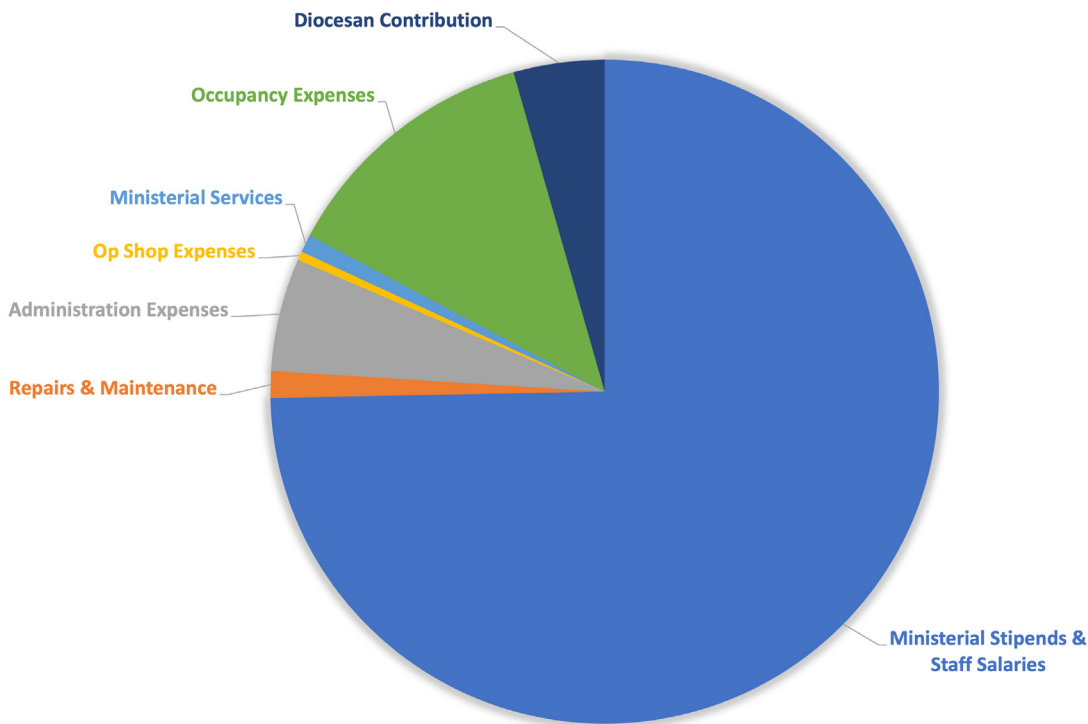
Mission

During 2023, a number of organisations were supported financially. These included Anglican Board of Mission, Rescue Mission for Children, Bush Church Aid, Anglicare, Baby Give Back, Anglican Parish of Burleigh Heads, Kids Hope.

Fixed Assets

The biggest change to our accounts has been the removal of land and buildings from our Balance Sheet. These items are owned by the Diocese and taken up in their financial accounts - in essence, they should never have been included in our accounts.

EXPENSES 2023



BUDGET FOR 2024

The budget for 2024 has a number of assumptions::

- Offerings will increase slightly
- The opening of the Markeri Street Op Shop on a Monday will continue for the whole year
- A small PMC grant will again be received in 2024
- Rev MA Rulf's locum in Palm Beach parish is currently only until Easter
- Any additional cash will be used for repairs and maintenance and mission

I wish to propose the following Formal Motions:

The meeting is asked to:

- Accept this finance report
- Approve the draft budget for the Anglican Church Robina for 2024
- Defer adoption of the Audited Accounts for the Anglican Church Robina (which includes the accounts for the Op Shops and TFSN) to Parish Council
- Defer adoption of the Audited Accounts for Riverwalk Robina Early Learning Centre to Parish Council
- Defer appointment of Auditors for the 2024 accounts for both entities to Parish Council

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Cash Budget 2024

DRAFT ROBINA ANGLICAN CHURCH INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023			2024 DRAFT BUDGET	
Category	Value	Notes	Value	Notes
INCOME				
Offerings	306,779		308,800	
Fundraising & Donations	0		0	all fundraising should be for purpose/mission
Ministerial Services	7,007		7,600	
Total normal income	313,786		316,400	
BUSINESS INCOME				
Riverwalk	0		0	
Op Shops	369,892		409,700	opening another day
Trinity Family Support Network	142,290		144,000	small CPI increase
Rent	49,882		52,800	small increase in rate
Other	56,991	incl bank interest, coffee cart, grant	55,300	incl PMC grant
Total business income	619,055		661,800	
TOTAL PARISH INCOME	932,841		978,200	
CHURCH EXPENDITURE				
Ministerial stipends& staff salaries	641,993		604,514	
Ministerial Services	7,474		6,970	
Diocesan Contribution	37,800		38,000	
Occupancy Expenses	113,780		118,600	
Administration Expenses	47,315		75,590	printer lease
Op Shop Expenses	3,701		3,400	
TFSN Expenses	15,328		11,600	
Mortgage Payments	76,907		80,400	
Repairs & Maintenance	11,127		22,500	
Project Connect Mission			15,000	
TOTAL EXPENSES	955,425		976,574	
PROFIT/LOSS	(22,584)		1,626	