

Congregational Meeting – Property Report

Some people know, some people think they know, and others actually don't know.

Listening to Neil's sermon two weeks ago, and the Haggai reading, it prompted these thoughts for my annual Property report.

Did you know?

In 1991 when this church complex was built, it cost us nothing because the total cost of the new church was covered by the sale of the Springvale Road church and the sale of the round-about corner. We also purchased what has become the 15 S/D property AND we gave a further \$240,000 + to Synod.

This church was debt free in December 1991 after being built, and remains that way to today - 32 years later. Our offering is not paying for any debt.

When the 2 new manses were built over 14 years ago they also cost us nothing because we sold the old Springvale Rd Church manse in Barkly court which covered the building costs of the 2 new manses, and the church extension AND we gave back to Synod a further \$70,000.

None of our offering was used.

20 years ago, some of us here today, and many past members, were so grateful for this magnificent debt free property, **we decided to put some money aside each month in a special *Deferred Maintenance* account** so that our children did not have to pay for example for the new chapel chairs 2 years ago (\$6,000), or the carpet (\$76,000), or manse repairs and lots of other expenditures required to replace worn out assets - and that is what we have done.

So none of our current offering has been used to pay for these and many other large items.

Over that 20 years we maintained a \$140,000 fund balance, which has paid for all these replacements. It is now down to around \$25,000 because of all those upgrades and repairs. **The fund now is refreshed out of our rental income, not offering**

With the electricity savings we achieved over 5 - 6 years **we paid for the \$48,000 worth of 120 solar panels and LED church lights - not out of our current offerings. And continues to, save around \$10,000 p.a.**

The water harvest system cut our water bills by over 50%.

None of our offering paid for the WHS, as we got a \$32,000 govt grant that covered the full cost.

A Govt grant (plus we used some of our Deferred Maintenance \$) covered the full cost of these 6 **Air Cond in the church.**

None of our offering was used.

The new LED lighting in the foyer and Fellowship areas has been paid for by Def Maintenance fund not our offering.

We have received another **\$10,000 govt sustainability grant this year that has covered 50% of the cost of the 4 new Air Cond in the foyer/fellowship with the balance coming from that same Def Maint account** (as we are replacing broken ceiling heating in the foyer fellowship).

None of our offering is being used.

For the past **8 years, the property rentals have covered all the operating costs** of our property (Power, heating, water, rates etc) and including such exorbitant things as our \$16,000 annual insurance costs - which will be over \$20,000 in 2023.

None of our offering is being used to run this building, repair it or maintain it.

The \$86,000 of 2022 property rental incomes we received maintains this building and all 3 of our manses at a nil cost to us and our offering. It also provides the funds to refill the Deferred

Maintenance fund so we can give our future congregation some monies so they can continue to be a presence here in GW for the years to come.

None of our offering covers that expense.

Thanks to a Synod grant in 2013, and a further bequest in 2019, all of the costs (computers, cameras etc) of the broadcast ministry (except annual internet connection) were fully funded. **This over the 13 years has totalled over \$30,000. And what an enormous benefit it was during lockdown.**

None of our offering has been used for the capital costs of the broadcast ministry.

The sound mixer (that you don't see but gain benefit) was replaced during the covid lockdown, and we used the Deferred Maintenance monies we had set aside for that task.

None of our offering has paid for that new mixer.

The two TV's on the wall - paid from our Deferred Maintenance fund and our Property Annual Rental Income.

The hearing loop in the chapel was paid for by a generous bequest.

The hearing loop upgrade in the church was funded by the Deferred Maintenance fund AND a generous bequest.

The Hymn books in the pews were paid for by a generous Bequest many years ago.

The playground climbing equipment was paid for by a generous Bequest.

The office technology was paid from the Deferred Maintenance fund.

And I have many, many more examples.

None of our current offering is used to pay for these facilities.

The installation of the swale and the transition to a low maintenance garden has continued. When we had a congregation of 1000 people we could have a roster of people to dead-head plants and flowers and maintain annuals. But we do not. Our rosters are hard to fill and our wish to reduce water dependancies means that we are transitioning from what I incorrectly may call an "*English Country Garden*" style to low maintenance australian - low water gardens.

All these costs are covered by our rentals. So our offering is not used.

So comments of inappropriate expenditure choices do not reflect an accurate or full story.

There has also been confusion regarding **Grants and Bequest monies**.

They **MUST** be used for the purpose they are received or we must give the funds back to the Govt or families if we do not meet the bequest conditions.

We cannot redirect those monies to other areas.

And **we cannot rent more space to external tenants** on a permanent basis to raise more funds as otherwise we would not have times and spaces available for our own church groups.

But please do not listen to those people who do not know - talk to myself or Ken Coutts

So, remember, none of the property costs comes from our current offering.

But if we increase our giving by the \$30,000 that Church Council has estimated, please remember that **NONE of it goes to these building costs.**

It all goes to a new Ministry team and to support their tasks, it goes to our Mission and Service commitment, it funds our various worship services and our own Mission group expenditures. However, without the increase, each and every one of these elements of our mission are placed at risk and would have to be reviewed.

Lastly, so what happens to our vacant manses now 17 is empty now and 15 will be in January. They will be repaired if required and spruced up where necessary to be held in readiness for when the JNC completes their task as they must be available for potential placements.

We do not own them, Synod Property trust owns them, so they cannot be commercially rented out, if ever, until after the JNC work is done.

So we will look after them for however long this takes.

Last time we had ministry team changes, manse refreshes cost \$25,000 plus and all was paid from the Deferred Maintenance fund - we are so lucky to, have that fund.

Thank you to the wonderful members of the Property Committee team who just do what needs to be done, all in their own time.

To Joanne in the office who manages the \$86,000 of 2022 rentals, the hirers when they are here and the associated necessary paperwork.

And to members of the congregation who go to extreme lengths to help us.

In ending, I would like to share with you a Beechworth retail outlet philosophy.

“It is better to create something that others criticise, rather than to create nothing and criticise others”

Warren Greenwood
Property Manager