

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REVIEW

REPORT

2022/23

PREFACE

A Reflection: Grief and Hope

'Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.'

Jesus to Peter - **John 21:18**

Sifting through the many responses as part of this review, I sensed frustration and dissatisfaction. I sensed a little hope and also despair. But behind all these feelings I sensed grief. I suggest this is the story *behind* the story. It is the reason for this review. It is the ongoing and inescapable reality of our church's decline.

No doubt, there will be some murmurs of protest; that not all our parishes are struggling, that there are signs of life and reasons to hope. Praise God. Nothing would make me happier than to be wrong. But I fear I am not wrong. Our good news stories are now parishes that are holding their own, rather than breaking new ground, while our dominant narrative is of an inexorable slippage towards a potential terminal failure. Where, in the last decades we have seen struggling congregations amalgamate, we are now seeing them simply close. We are not only short on people, but imagination.

A decade ago, it seemed a certain kind of theology might protect us from decline, a certain way of doing church. It doesn't seem like that anymore.

There is grief in all of this. A grief that this review touches on, without giving it a name. Perhaps the root of our frustration is this: *we may not be able to be what we once were*. The inadequacies that we face in our local parishes may not be able to be resolved by Presbytery or Synod, because those same inadequacies are mirrored there. No one is immune to this. We are being taken by the hand, and led somewhere we do not want to go.

My lifetime in the church has been a lifetime of seeing the church empty out. Like others, I have looked for reasons to explain it: secularism, consumerism, individualism, the death of Christendom, the church's failure to speak the language of its context, services too long, sermons too boring, music too foreign. I no longer try and understand, because it does not seem like a reality that I can change. I have seen, and I have participated in, creative, prayerful attempts to reengage with our world. At times, the decline has been stalled, or even momentarily reversed. But eventually, normal transmission resumes. It is happening whether I want it to or not. We are being taken by the hand, and led somewhere we do not want to go.

This decline is not happening because of our failure, or our lack of faith. I say this, not because we have not failed, or lacked faith, but because we haven't failed or lacked

faith any more than usual. Assuming we are responsible might claim too big a role for ourselves in this story.

No doubt there are things we can change, situations we can make better with the way we organise ourselves. And this review is seeking to aid in that work. There are real improvements that are within our grasp. But unless we unmask this grief that sits below the surface, we will only be tying millstones around each other's necks, burdens of unreachable expectation that we can get back to what we had if we only do this or try that.

We need to bury that dream. We need to stand with Jesus by the tomb of Lazarus and weep, not simply rush past our despair in the wild belief that everything is going to be alright. Ahh, but Jesus *does* raise Lazarus, we respond with relief. It *is* going to be alright.

And yet, Lazarus still dies. And Jesus stops and weeps, because things are not alright. Ask Lazarus if it was alright for him as he struggled against his sickness until he died! Ask his sisters, who begged Jesus to come and heal him before it was too late, if it was 'alright.' Even the risen Christ still bears the scars of the cross. This may not be the end of our story, but we are still dying. And dying is awful. This situation calls for our grief, as well as our hope. For it was Jesus' *grief*, not his miraculous raising of Lazarus that caused those standing nearby to say, 'see how deeply he must have loved him' (John 11:36). Grief is part of our witness. Without the grief, our hope becomes detached and unreal. Coupled with grief, our hope takes seriously the pain of our experience, and it takes seriously the promises of God: that this is not the end.

But it is still *an* end. Resurrection is not resuscitation. What new thing comes after this will not simply be a reprise of what has been before. We may be witnessing the end of the institutional form that the Presbyterian movement has taken in Aotearoa for the last 175 years. I suggest the task ahead of us is not to try and reverse this decline: not to try and reclaim the high ground of society's spiritual imagination, not to become important and influential once more. We have been pushed to the edges. We are on the brink. The task ahead of us must be: how do we embody the gospel *here*. What gift has God graced us to make to the world, even from this hard place?

We may not be able to sail into these headwinds, but we can surely tack across them. We can accept and embrace the reality of decline, grieve for what we have lost and left behind, and then meet this reality with imagination, liberated from what we *have to be* by a faithful reckoning with *who we are*, and more importantly, *whose we are*. This God of ours is no stranger to working with bereft people, outnumbered and overwhelmed. We are being led somewhere we do not want to go, but friends, we are *being led*. As we consider our way forward from here, may we no longer dig in our heels, but find the courage to follow. Prayerfully, let's grieve what is lost and make space for what is to come.

By Rev Dr Malcolm Gordon

Lent 2023

on behalf of the Southern Presbytery Review Team 2022-23.

INTRODUCTION

On 17th August 2022 a meeting of Presbytery Council ratified the establishment of a team to review the Southern Presbytery.

Convenor: Rev Dr Alan Missen; members: Rev Clare Lind, Rev Dr Malcolm Gordon and Judith Forbes. Terms of Reference for the review are in Appendix A.

The team met by Zoom (the normal mode since the convenor lives in Rangiora) and compiled a questionnaire (Appendix B) that was emailed to church ministers and parish clerks on 8th September. A further reminder was sent on 8th November.

Responses from each region were: Maitua (7/11); Dunedin (13/23--but two church emails were invalid—see comments on page 13); North Otago (4/5--but one church email was invalid); Central Otago (4/7); Clutha (4/7); Southland (9/20; although one of these was from Equip South). There were also responses from seven other ministers within the Presbytery.

Apart from the questionnaire, individual team members interviewed (person, phone, or Zoom) a number of Presbytery ministers and members.

The responses to the questionnaire were varied and ranged from overall satisfaction to definite dismay. Individual responses are of course confidential. It should be noted that the whole of New Zealand had just come out of over two years of Covid lockdowns and restrictions and that obviously had impact on some of the normal functioning of Regional Groups and the ministry and mission life of churches.

It is also apparent that over the past ten years there has been a significant decline in church numbers and membership, finances, and indeed the number of available ministers. These declines are not restricted to the Southern Presbytery.

However, whatever negatives may be taken from our work there are already more positive and productive forces at work. In conversations with key people the convenor and team have noted that some changes are already being initiated and progress is starting to be made in important areas.

The review team analysed the responses (apologies from the convenor for not using a more contemporary form of survey such as SurveyMonkey) and some of the issues raised or observed will be addressed in more detail in what follows. These will be in no particular order, although it might be helpful to commence with some positive feedback.

WHAT IS GOING WELL?

Comments in response to question 4 concerning staff ("From your perspective how well is Presbytery resourcing parishes and ministries in your area through staff") elicited positive feedback. As one of our team summarized:

In general, there is a lot of positive feedback about the staff. People around the Presbytery have found them approachable and eager to assist in response to requests for resourcing for ministry. The staff are seen as the day to day outworking of Presbytery's resourcing for parishes. Alongside this positive feeling, was the acknowledgement that the staff are most often used by parishes who know about them, or know how to access their help. The initiative lies with parishes to contact and invite staff to work with them. In cases where parishes did not know about them, or did not take the initiative, no connection occurred. For example, does the youth advisor only work with congregations who have youth groups, or the Children and Families Advisor only work with congregations who have children's programmes. Some respondents seemed to feel this was the case. How, then, do we communicate to parishes who is working for them, and how they can help?

Another issue raised was that while it was evident staff were working hard, for members of Presbytery to have confidence in the staff structure, there needed to be regular reporting and good communication, which is presently felt to be lacking.

(The paragraph above regarding communication will be addressed later in this report).

In answer to question 5 ("What is going well with Presbytery?") a number of responses highlighted areas of gratitude:

The staff are a huge asset. It is still operational after the major change from smaller presbyteries and it is doing a good job of overseeing the bigger issues of the wider church.

Very well organised workgroups

Administrative – Alan Judge gives timely information in a timely manner.

In general admin seems to go well although can be a bit rigid to Book of Order etc. definitions and rules.

Some Resource Groups are seemingly working well with some "gas still in the tank".

Getting good support from MSB Convenor and Interim Moderator.

The workgroups work hard and achieve very good results with, at times, complex issues. Any requests have been answered in a timely manner. Great knowledge of the book of order.

They have thorough processes – and when things do not go well, they are especially good.

The day-to-day tasks are probably being done adequately by the executive staff, the Presbytery Council, and the work groups.

From the analysis of all the questionnaire returns to question 5 one of our team made the following comments:

3 comments stuck out for me from the feedback.

- 1) 'There are lots of good skilled people. We have an amazing mix of ministers and elders who are incredibly talented. I am filled with hope of what could be realised if we learned how to work together.'
- 2) 'I think Southern Presbytery needs to evaluate and revise their vision and mission statements.' I am inclined to agree. The Presbytery needs to revise its Clarity in Mission Statement as well. What is on the website appears to be a heavy borrow from a national clarity in mission statement that is at least 9 years old.
- 3) '**When you know the channel** (who to talk to) you can generally get the information that you need.' This chimes with my own suspicion that those channels are not always obvious.

VISION AND STRATEGY

The comment (2) cited just above leads into the most serious concern expressed by many.

Developing and maintaining a strategic vision and strategy is key to enabling and releasing mission and ministry in local, diverse, and effective ways.

It appears that this has been a gap since the commencement of the Southern Presbytery in 2011. Despite a suggestion in 2019 "that Presbytery establish a new Workgroup for the Strategic Development of the Presbytery continuing the work of the Presbytery Review and Development Group" Presbytery Council decided it would take on that role itself.

At the time of our questionnaire it appeared that there had been little progress and we received comments in response to questions 6 ("Are there any "gaps" where Presbytery is missing some things?") and 9 ("How could Presbytery improve in the future?") such as:

The big gap with Presbytery is that it lacks a strategic plan. This should be driven by the executive, but it is always put to one side.

There doesn't seem to be a plan. It seems like the future is being ignored and everyone is just hoping for the best. In the way money and people's time and energy is spent seems unsustainable, lacking strategy, etc. And what does that say about our theology. It's full of gaps!

Southern presbytery is not represented well among other presbyteries. It has a reputation of apathy and a lack of understanding of the issues and what others are doing. It seems that if something doesn't come from southern, we don't trust it. We don't have a clear direction and just amble through business as usual. Strategic Direction is on the agenda, but is left with no time to discuss and little will to do so.

If the Presbytery Council were able to do (and facilitate) some big-picture work on what we are about as a regional church entity and what is needed to help that to happen, it may be that that is all that is required to draw the bits together. If that frames a clear and coherent plan it may be that Presbytery finds it has become the place for imagining and initiative, and the Synod is more than happy to back it. Maybe.

Develop a strategic plan including:

- 1. clarity on such things as knowing what the gospel is and what our mission is.*
- 2. researching what really works and prayerfully discerning God's strategy for our area.*
- 3. how significant interventions will be resourced.*

We need a focused rescue plan but there is nothing. I think every other presbytery has a strategic plan (or similar). Most are available on their websites. This presbytery does not despite being urged from various quarters to develop one. There seems to be no interest.

Better working in together as there seems to be still a lot of guarding our own patch, rather than working together. There seems to be no clear vision or missional focus. There are really too many small parishes that are just holding on, with buildings that are, or will, cost too much to maintain that need to be encouraged to merge. This will require some brave conversations, but they really need to be held. With the ever-decreasing number of ministers in full time ministry the way we operate our committees and structures need to be looked at.

Then there's the question of strategic planning. How do we find a way to talk together about the future of Presbytery, or of regions within Presbytery, or getting neighbouring parishes to talk together about what the future might be. Is this a time for the clay to be squished back to an unformed lump from which the potter is going to create a new vessel fit for purpose in this new time?

If Presbytery and Synod committed to an effective, future focussed strategic direction (and staffed to achieve this) and funded what was necessary to achieve this it could make a significant difference to the life and spiritual vitality of southern churches. The current structures are not sustainable. Committees of representatives create parochial response, rather than a joint commitment to discerning. They should be much smaller and more effective. The model we have is old and suitable for the church that was, not the church we are becoming.

One of our team reviewed the responses to question 6 as follows:

The ten comments on the need for strategic thinking and some sort of "road map" are among the longer responses to question 6. Some were made, mindful of the future barrelling down on the presbytery, yet little is being done to prepare for it. Several see the plan required as a rescue

plan, and one is concerned with what is and isn't sustainable. Another commented, 'there is a sense of the old boys' club – those not in formal leadership positions- who have great influence over presbytery business, and went on to say 'The elephant in the room is the Presbytery/Synod role split of roles.'

Two others were concerned with the lack of guidelines and big picture thinking around decisions to do with assets and building sales with a view to future mission. One other called for some deeper thought to be put into 'what is a community of faith and what is mission in a secular world.' They remarked, 'We are not convinced that division is limiting the way forward, but rather a lack of clarity about the role of church in secular society.'

Related to the comments on strategy and leadership were four comments on the need to foster spirituality and prayer.

Obviously this issue is seen by many as a major priority for Presbytery Council to address. A process for doing this is offered under 1a of the Recommendations section of this report.

PASTORAL CARE AND CONNECTION

There were many comments about a lack of connection. Churches located on the periphery of regions were most likely to experience this and of course Covid again has not helped in this regard (although folk are only a phone call away!).

In response to Question 2 ("To what extent do you/your elders/your church have a meaningful connection with Southern Presbytery") our team member summarized the responses as follows:

These comments reveal a significant sense of disconnection between the majority of respondents and Southern Presbytery. While it is not absolutely clear how many of the responses are from ministers (and some others) expressing their individual views, and how many represent the views of a wider group (e.g. church councils, sessions), the majority of comments reveal a sense that individual churches do not feel a vital or relevant connection to the Presbytery other than when they need support for a specific issue or are receiving resourcing assistance. Several individuals feel a connection themselves, often because they are personally involved, but there is little indication that their churches share that sense of connection.

They are, in general, appreciative of support and assistance at those times that it is needed, but otherwise do not necessarily recognise or "feel" the value of being part of a regional/national church.

There were a number of comments in response to Question 4 ("From your perspective how well is Presbytery resourcing parishes and ministries in your area ...") that reinforced the lack of connection for some churches:

Distance is a challenge. We need more connection/resourcing from Presbytery.

Our interim moderator is the only support we have had from Presbytery.

We're aware that Presbytery is trying to resource everybody, but that resources are not plentiful.

People seem tired and lack a sense of direction. We need to move past tweaks and make courageous decisions. The last review raised issues which we have not been able to find solutions for.

As a small parish we seem unimportant while Presbytery deals with bigger issues.

We have not had any resourcing from Presbytery for many years.

We have had very little contact with Presbytery.

The reliance on electronic forms of communication makes connection harder.

These and other comments were summarised as follows"

Firstly, there was an acknowledgement from a number of respondents that Presbytery is doing the basics (supplying interim moderators, forming settlement boards and establishing commissions) well. In some cases, this is a parish's only perceived connection with Presbytery. There was a recognition from some respondents that this is a difficult season, that people seem tired, and that Presbytery is doing a good job in a trying situation. However, it was noted that Presbytery has not been able to constructively intervene in some congregations dealing with significant issues of conflict, and that this is a form of resourcing Presbytery needs to be able to provide.

The size of the Presbytery, and the difficulty in travel to access resourcing or develop collegiality was a common thread in responses. Some small parishes felt their size precluded them from any attention from Presbytery. The (self-professed) disengagement of some senior leaders in the life of Presbytery is also of significant concern.

There may be no easy solution to these concerns. However, it is suggested that as well as connections within Regional Groups being encouraged, the role of Moderator probably needs to be spelt out in more detail in regard to that person's contact with all the churches in Southern Presbytery.

For example, a personal visit sometime within the two year period, as well as a phone (or Zoom) call to the church minister (or parish clerk in the absence of a minister) a couple of times a year.

REGIONAL GROUPS

Responses were strongly complementary of some Regional Groups (Southland, Central, and Clutha) and critical of DNO.

As was noted in a summary of responses to Question 4 ("From your perspective how well is Presbytery resourcing parishes and ministries in your area through Regional Groups? Can you give specific examples?")

The regional groups are an important part of the machinery of Presbytery, and this is evident both from where they are working well, and where they are not. The responses indicate that the regional groups in Invercargill (EquipSouth), Southland, Central Otago and Clutha are running well. Some note that this is not directly due to any involvement from Presbytery, but the motivation of key leaders in those areas. Many respondents comment on the effective dormancy of the Dunedin/North Otago resource group, citing COVID lockdowns as the death knell. Recently, a fortnightly lunch for Dunedin based ministers has emerged, although respondents note this is not the same, with no elders in attendance, and the primary focus being collegiality. The revitalisation of the DNO group must be a priority.

There is a sense that the regional groups, where functioning, are offering good support and resourcing, although this tends to be focussed on ministers (and in some cases, LSM leaders), and there is little support for elders or members. There is a concern that these groups are at capacity, and this needs to be considered as Presbytery sends more work their way (Parish reviews for example). A further issue for groups in larger regions seems to be a lack of funding available for groups to cover speakers or travel expenses.

It was noted earlier that Covid has obviously affected the ability and opportunity for gatherings but that is now not an issue. Concern was also expressed that elders and lay leaders have not been included in regional resourcing events as much as they might like. It is hoped that future gatherings of regional groups will encourage involvement of elders and provide resourcing for them also.

Resourcing could include drawing on SPRAG (Spiritual Renewal and Growth Group) to provide a regional weekend retreat. At present this Workgroup appears to be underutilised. Other possibilities are many.

It is heartening to learn since our questionnaire was returned that a change has happened with the DNO Regional Group and monthly events are being planned and scheduled for those churches' ministers and elders (The first of these was held on 14th March and had around thirty people in attendance).

Our team member who analysed responses to Question 1 (e) (Attendance at Regional Gatherings) also observed:

Average rating was low at 6, with std deviation of 2.87. The most common responses were 8s and 9s, indicating strong satisfaction from some, but the high standard deviation indicates that respondents' experience is widely varied. Comments here were "no contact over past 2 years", "not great recently", "on planning committee which has pretty much died out over the last year. No one prepared to join, no energy, too many naysayers", "I think the DNO group has died. Even when it operated, I found the topics were of little interest to me", and "Never been invited, wouldn't know when they are on".

This feedback indicates that there is significant potential for reforming and strengthening the regional gatherings as a key source of encouragement and equipping for the churches.

PRESBYTERY GATHERINGS

A large number of returns (in response to questions 4, 6, and 9) expressed concerns about gatherings but some also complimented the gathering held in Cromwell last November.

Comments such as:

Efforts to shape Gatherings around inspiration have been appreciated.

Recent Gathering had interesting workshops to encourage parishes to explore different ministries.

I think taking a lead from other Presbyteries regarding gatherings would be worthwhile, with a move to predominately resource and provide fellowship. Business items while necessary, often produce division, due to the diverse makeup of our ministers and elders.

Place more emphasis on worship and mission in our Gatherings. Take time to enjoy being with one another.

Emphasise worship / resourcing / encouragement at gatherings. Condense business into final hour or so.

Scope for Biannual gatherings to be condensed to annual and use Synod gathering as 2nd gathering. Ideally both these opportunities are centred on encouraging and challenging church leaders and leaderships based around worship and scripture → business may be able to be addressed by presbytery elders and ministers.

PRESBYTERY GATHERINGS: we can enable participation by a wider range of people; opportunities for collegiality and talking across difference – we are a broad church but our differences are increasingly dividing us; dealing maturely with conflict; almost no opportunity for a wide range of voices to be heard on difficult issues – we aren't practising safe places to talk about issues: different people, different views, in a safe space; gatherings don't deal with strategic issues.

Change presbytery gatherings- rubber stamping is all that happens with business, there is no real space for dialogue or discussion. So rubber stamp it online and don't waste time at a gathering. Or find a way for large group discussion etc that works. I believe in group decision making but there has not been appropriate forms of discussion since I've been around. New and more creative ways to engage in the decisions need to be found as the current method isn't good enough. Things like Susan Jack speaking was great! But let's look at what other presbyteries are doing as our current way is not enjoyed or productive and I feel it's a long way to drive etc for everyone to rubber stamp stuff. That could be done on zoom and be much more environmentally friendly. If we are to gather, let's look at what we are gathering for. I know business needs to happen but this model is not the way.

A summary of responses to Question 4 ("From your perspective how well is Presbytery resourcing parishes and ministries in your area through ... Presbytery Gatherings") by a team member noted some positives also:

Respondents revealed a range of perspectives regarding the Presbytery Gatherings. A few respondents were glowing, finding the Gatherings inspiring and helpful, another handful were sharply critical, finding the focus on business, or the manner the business is conducted in, unhelpful. The majority found the Gatherings to be well-run and well-intended, but often mixed in their effectiveness. It was noted that worship and reading Scripture together seems like an afterthought, rather than the central task of Presbytery. Another comment was that our resourcing needs to be led by discernment.

Most affirmed the importance of developing relationships as part of Presbytery Gatherings. Despite sincere efforts, the resourcing offered at Gatherings does not seem to be filtering down to effective change at a congregational level, and this raises the question, do we know how to lead and embed change? The Gatherings' effectiveness are further limited by not everyone being able to attend. This invites us to consider how resourcing at Gatherings can be made more widely available (recorded and then used as the basis for discussion at Regional Groups for example – with those who had attended the Gathering acting as facilitators).

The comments above reflect the responses of some who noted that on occasion because of personal issues and distance, attendance at a Gathering was not possible. They wondered in this time of modern technology why it was not feasible for a Gathering to be live streamed? Or, as commented above, recorded and then one or more aspects used in a Regional Group meeting.

Concern was raised by some respondents in regard to how discussion around potentially divisive issues is facilitated at Presbytery gatherings. There was no indication in this that Presbytery should avoid raising and discussing controversial topics, but rather that careful processes and strong moderation are essential to preserve unity in our diversity, and the mana and wellbeing of all involved. Specifically honouring the reality that, on some issues, Presbytery

members have views that range from one end of a continuum to the other, and that listening to those diverse views is of benefit to all, would be more helpful than any process that encouraged adversarial positioning or, even worse, mocking of other points of view.

PRESBYTERY CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

In general people appreciate the modes of communication that the Presbytery employs. The following table was compiled from the responses to Question 1:

	% who had experience of this in last 24 months	Average rating (mean)	Standard deviation (a measure of how spread out the response were)
a) Southern Headlines	79.3%	6.7	2.1
b) Emailed information and notices	86.2%	6.8	2.0
c) Southern Presbyterians website and Facebook page	69.0%	6.1	2.2
d) Attendance at Presbytery meetings	82.7%	5.5	2.5
e) Attendance at regional gatherings e.g. DNO. Equip Central, Equip South.	65.5%	6	2.9
f) Conversation with Presbytery Office	69.0%	6.6	2.1
g) Input from Presbytery Resourcing staff	58.6%	7.1	2.2
h) Contact with a Presbytery Work Group	69.0%	5.7	2.6
i) Contact with a special purpose committee or appointment	51.7%	7.4	2.2
j) Contact with your own Regional Group	62.1%	6.5	2.9

There were various comments in response to the first three categories: In general the average rating was between 6 and 7. More had experience of Southern Headlines and emailed information, and less of the website and Facebook page. As one team member observed:

There may be some quick "wins" possible in responding to this feedback – it seems that many Presbyterians, including leaders, are unaware of this website and the Facebook page. When I took a quick look at the website, it seems to be well-structured but there is a lot of out-of-date material (even from my limited knowledge), and this may reflect either a lack of connection with what is happening across the regional church, or a lack of two-way communication with and from the website admin team, or both. The Facebook page seems to be largely used to communicate about large-scale events and vacancies, with only seven posts in the last 12 months, with these posts having generated a total of 11 "likes". This low frequency of posting makes it very unlikely to show on many Facebook members' "feeds", even when they have "liked" or "followed" the page. Perhaps it is therefore questionable whether this platform is of real value. (The only way for a Facebook page to have any impact is for it to have frequent posts, and for there to be a significant number of people who have "liked" it, and responded to recent posts. Engagement drives engagement on these platforms, so investment in a very inactive page is probably not worthwhile.)

Comments were:

"Website is good. Facebook is what lowers the score." and "I didn't know there was a Facebook page. I use the website very occasionally but noted recently, for example, when looking for the dates, that the upcoming Presbytery meeting is not listed as a coming event."

The newsletter "Southern Headlines" is attractive and delivered monthly through email.

However, the convenor of this review and others have encountered a couple of other issues that need to be "tidied up." One is that some email addresses are no longer valid and require correction. This is serious when it means that certain churches are "out of the loop" with no one realizing!

The other is that the Southern Presbyterians web site is often out of date and lacks correct information (E.g. Regional Groups are still being called "Resource Groups"). The slowness in updating the website can be easily corrected! Also, surely all the personnel of Presbytery presented on the website must include cell phone contact details as well as emails.

RESOURCING

In response to Question 6 (“How do you think Presbytery can best be resourced for what it does? I.e. how can it best afford its staff and resourcing?”) a number of responses highlighted the reduction in membership, ministers, and finances. Concern was expressed about how Presbytery could continue to be funded.

Comments such as:

Parishes can't afford to keep paying more and more levies. We need to find more sustainable ways to resource Presbytery.

Parishes can't keep propping up Presbytery through levies, while Synod gives away money with a lack of accountability. Synod needs to fund Presbytery to free up local parishes.

Because of the way money from property sales and funds from dissolved congregations, south of the Waitaki, reverts to the Synod, the Presbytery is always going to be fairly reliant on Synod releasing funding for staff etc. Levies will never cover it. At the moment, this release feels bitsy and not terribly well coordinated.

We wonder if the system is fundamentally broken; parishes can't continue to prop up Presbytery with levies; meanwhile Synod disperses millions each year with (in our opinion) little accountability; somehow system has to shift so the regional life of the church is funded by Synod to free up local congregations.

Synod funding of staff is a gift of Presbytery, but the lack of direct funding for the Presbytery itself feels constrictive.

Reduce levies (by reducing ineffective staffing, unproductive meetings, use Zoom to cut travel, reduce the number of Presbytery meetings, simply procedures, and avoid box ticking exercises).

As long as Synod and Presbytery continue as separate entities, Presbytery will have no funding for staffing or mission initiatives. Any bold planning is constrained by a lack of certainty around finances, and both Presbytery and Synod seem to lack the will to change this.

The working relationship between Synod and Presbytery needs to be enhanced and strengthened to help with resourcing.

Either increase levies or get more money from Synod, which is unlikely.

May need to scale down the EO role and devolve it to volunteers.

Do a budget, set the levy and live within said budget. End of.

The following is a summary of the comments received:

Generally, there was a sense that the model of funding Presbytery from levies is unsustainable. This is because as more parishes close, Presbytery's funding pool shrinks. There was also a clear call that congregations cannot afford for levies to increase, citing increases in insurance costs and covering stipends as significant pressure points. The relationship between Synod and Presbytery is seen by some as a solution and by others as a problem. The former group believe Synod could pick

up the slack to fund Presbytery (although this may be prevented by legislation and/or the direction set by the Otago Foundation Trust Board). However, the latter group see the peculiarity of the Synod/Presbytery relationship as problematic. Because funds from closed parishes revert to the Synod, the Southern Presbytery has less control over its own funding and missional spending than any other Presbytery around the country (who receive the funds from closed parishes directly, held in trust by the Church Property Trustees). Simply put, this means that when a parish closes, Presbytery becomes poorer and Synod becomes richer. Some responses noted the disparity between Presbytery's funds and Synod's, questioning the accountability with which Synod distributes its resources. There was recognition and gratitude regarding Synod's contribution to parishes Presbytery levies during the COVID outbreak, but also an awareness that this cannot continue. Respondents note the importance of the relationship between Synod and Presbytery, indicating it is not in good health.

It was felt that Presbytery lacks a coherent vision at present, and that resourcing would follow if this could be found and articulated clearly. For some respondents, this raised the related question: what kind of role is the Executive Officer meant to be? Is it administrative, is it pastoral and relational or is it strategic? Can some of its functions be devolved to volunteers? Some respondents were not sure what they were getting from Presbytery for their contribution at present. This is clearly a cause for concern, and an invitation to consider how Presbytery communicates and engages with its members.

There was a suggestion that Presbytery needs alternative streams of income, and that this may require innovation to accomplish. A return to smaller Presbyteries was mooted, as was a reduction in the level of resourcing to match the declining nature of the church. Although this was countered by the assertion that any reduction would be a retrograde step *because* of the declining nature of the church.

As far as the issue of people resources is concerned, it is a burden when ministers and lay leaders are drawn on to fill multiple roles in Presbytery Workgroups, Synod Committees, and Regional Group leadership. Often the same people fill more than one role! One solution could be to reduce the number of people required in a particular Workgroup. For example, most Workgroups—apart from Finance and Spiritual Growth and Renewal—contain in excess of ten members. Unless a group specifically requires representation from each region, there is no reason (in this review team's opinion) why groups need to have more than five to six people. Were this to be implemented it would free up a lot of people power!

The issue of reducing numbers of ministers is a real and nation-wide concern. One remedy could be to reactivate retired ministers who are still "young at heart." Another is to implement a strategy recently employed in the southern

region where an available minister was used as a resource person to support a cluster of parishes.

What about finance? People have commented that some churches cannot continue to support the funding of Presbytery. It was encouraging to learn that Synod provided significant support for Presbytery during the Covid crisis. Would it be possible for further support if Presbytery had a clearer strategic plan? Or does the role of Executive Officer need to be reduced to (for example) two thirds time? Or is there some other solution that could arise from the next section?

SYNOD OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND

The questionnaire responses included a significant number who expressed serious concern about the relationship between Presbytery and Synod. The greatest concerns came from those closest to the geographic centre of business!

Comments included:

The relationship with Synod appears to be clunky even with the changes brought in in 2018.

Strained: Presbytery do not appear to respect Synod and appear to think Synod is a means by which to extract money: they only appear to talk to them when they want money.

Synod-Presbytery: relationship is tense; as in previous question, system fundamentally broken; still hear language of “synod” people and “presbytery” people which is nonsensical; two regional governing bodies responsible for the same geographic area – one with responsibility for ministry, the other with all the wealth ...

It almost seems like we have two groups vying for the same pool of people for committees and workload.

With synod at times uneasy – sometimes feels like two Alpha dogs circling one another.

I do not think this question can be answered without resolving the ridiculous situation that we Southern Presbyterians find ourselves in with two competing regional church bodies that we belong to. It does not make any sense, it is ripe for reform, and we are not going to go anywhere until some useful outcome is forged. That is just my opinion!

The relationship between the Synod and Presbytery appears to be characterised by anxiety, mistrust a struggle for control over resources and influence. Although both organisations exist to follow Jesus, are made up of largely the same ministers and elders, and cover the same territory the Synod and Presbytery seem to struggle to work effectively together to resource, support and empower local congregations in ministry and mission. It is not clear why both organisations are necessary.

I observe there to be an adversarial relationship between Presbytery and Synod – I’m not sure it’s warranted, but in any case it needs to be addressed. We have a unique arrangement in Southern Presbytery which if healthy provides us as parishes access to unique resources and people, if

unhealthy disconnects money from mission, creates tension between organisations, and puts staff in an unhelpful position.

Relationship with Synod is unequal as synod holds power of funds and assets. Apart from power of appointment of representatives, there is little connection between Presbytery and the other members of the Presbyterian family.

On the relationship between Southern Presbytery and the Synod of Otago and Southland: This relationship is energy-sapping rather than life-giving. Synod is the dominant partner in the relationship, to the detriment of mission. The relationship is functional rather than collaborative.

How this situation came to be is partly based in the formation of Southern Presbytery itself. Before that time the Synod provided a valued umbrella support structure for the five smaller Presbyteries. What was created in 2011 was a Presbytery that covered the same territory as Synod but did not have access to the funding that other NZ Presbyteries enjoy. For example, when a church closes in every other Presbytery in New Zealand, its funds can be accessed by the Presbytery for administration as well as mission. Such is not the case down south.

The staff who are currently employed by Synod on behalf of all the churches in the Southern Presbytery are mostly appreciated. However, there appears to be an anomaly observed by some in that staff do not come under the jurisdiction and direct control of Presbytery. It also appears that while staff have a review every three years there is minor input from Presbytery into that process.

One wonders whether the perceived strain between Synod and Presbytery is more to do with personalities, finance, priorities, power or a combination of all four. Perhaps the situation may ease when a clearly established Strategic Framework is developed and adopted by Presbytery.

While Synod funds appear to be tied up under current legislation and its relationship with the Otago Foundation Trust Board there are other funds from legacies that have been used in the past (e.g. Covid support for parish levies) and could be provided in the future to assist Presbytery financially.

There are a number of possibilities that could "move the goalposts" or "change the rules."

The easiest is for Synod to be invited to fund Presbytery initiatives (e.g. parish reviews, Regional Group gatherings, Moderator and Council costs, and maybe even continue help with levies) from legacy funds.

Less likely but worth considering is to combine Presbytery and Synod to the extent that they have a common Council, Moderator, and combined committees/workgroups where practical.

A longer term solution is to consider a change to the legislation so that funds from churches that cease to exist can be used for Presbytery/Synod mission, ministry, and administration.

A final solution but even less likely (although suggested by a number of people outside of Dunedin) is for Presbytery to dissolve and regroup as three regional Presbyteries (DNO, Central Otago and Clutha, Southland and Maitaia).

PARISH REVIEWS

A small number of responses to the questionnaire expressed concern about a lack of parish reviews.

My understanding is that, what would have been considered core roles of the Presbytery in the past, e.g. parish reviews, are now not undertaken. This may or may not be appropriate given the reduction in people resource available to presbytery.

The lack of regular parish reviews, which has been a problem for at least 15 years, does mean that some basics can get missed, including mundane stuff like Session minutes recorded and stored properly (which can surprisingly create problems down the track) and a regular outside look at property. Much as I would love to see the return of the Quinquennial Visitation, this is not going to happen – but we do need to identify the matters, both routine and peculiar, which need to be scrutinised (regularly) with fresh eyes.

This is a key function of Presbytery [BOO 8.4 (b)] and annual returns to Charities Services in 2021 and 2022 noted that only five full parish reviews had occurred over that two year period.

Presbytery Council has been aware of this lack and had established a Parish Reviews Workgroup headed by Rev Carlton Johnstone. A report brought to a Presbytery Gathering in June 2022 was adopted and picked up by a following meeting of Presbytery Council (Appendix C).

The reluctance of one or two Regional Groups (especially DNO) to support parish reviews is not adequate for the following reasons:

1. A regular parish review provides a parish with a connection to Presbytery that makes them feel recognised and appreciated.
2. A parish review helps a parish to focus its ownership of ministry and mission.
3. A review also may give an early warning of potential problem areas that the Regional Group (and Presbytery) can assist with.

It should be recognized that this issue is not confined to Southern Presbytery. Indeed other Presbyteries have also not been engaging in reviews and are currently working on a fresh approach. In all these cases there is a genuine concern about a lack of “person power.”

It is the opinion of this review’s convenor that once a satisfactory format has been established (hopefully before mid-year) Regional Groups will establish a team (or more) of reviewers that includes recently retired and suitably skilled lay people. What might also assist in this programme is if Synod was asked and willing to financially support this venture. For example, if each reviewer was granted (or their church in the case of a minister) \$500 plus travelling expenses, how might that change the landscape?

WORKGROUPS

Around the middle of February members of the Ministry, Candidates, SPRAG, and Finance Workgroups were invited to participate in a brief survey through Google Docs (see Appendix D).

Fourteen responses were received and are summarized below:

Ministry Workgroup (4 responses, 1 shared response with Nominations Committee)

The general sense is that this Workgroup is working effectively, despite having a large workload finding Interim Moderators and MSB convenors. This workload is expected to surge with the next wave of retiring ministers. The group is diverse with a mixture of lay and ordained representing a range of ministry contexts, with a good working knowledge of the Workgroup’s role within Presbytery (although this is not as true for newer members). The effectiveness of this workgroup is attributed in large part to the convenors ability to lead discussion well and enable members to contribute. Another aspect that helps is a commitment to meeting twice yearly in person which establishes a relational base within the group, which helps interim decisions by email to be made more easily. Lastly, the Workgroup has developed smaller subgroups which tackle certain tasks, allowing for streamlined workflow.

A concern is that at times the Workgroup can be more reactive than strategic, although the nature of many tasks makes this somewhat hard to avoid (ministry placements, retirements etc). Despite this, there is a determination to fit people into the right roles, rather than just find anyone, and members feel this approach is paying off. Perhaps, this is the Workgroups way of *responding strategically*.

Candidates Workgroup (5 responses)

The response from this Workgroup was more mixed. Some respondents see the group functioning well, with assessment days being well planned and online business handled competently. However, there was an acknowledgement of 'some failures' in recent years while it was felt by some that the group was working poorly. The group has had a sense of transience for some, with not enough long-term members, although others suggest the institutional memory in the group is good. Some respondents felt the group was operating well while others lamented a lack of organisation and appreciation of processes. Members being 'time-poor' was a factor in making the group's work more challenging.

On the positive side, strengths were a good mix of members representing the various regions of the Presbytery, robust decision making and good communication from the convenor and KCML. The suggestion was that problems originated 'upstream' in the form of a lack of candidates, particularly NOM. There was a sense that there was pressure to lower the standard required for ordination, possibly as a result of fewer applicants, although this was not spelled out.

On the negative side, it was felt some communication with candidates on behalf of the Workgroup was unprofessional, that the committee was run in an ad hoc manner and that this made it more difficult to make discerning decisions about candidates.

Spiritual Renewal and Growth (4 responses)

This group has just been reconfigured after an earlier iteration was unable to make progress due to members being committed elsewhere. At this early stage there is a sense that there are good people on the group, but a lack of clarity about the task ahead. One suggestion was that this group work to resource the moderator in preparing the two annual Presbytery gatherings.

Finance (1 response)

Obviously not much can be said from one response, although it ought to be noted that it was felt the group was too large for the amount of work being undertaken. At times meetings were hard to justify based on what needed to be discussed.

ASSOCIATED GROUPS

A majority of responses indicated that the relationship Presbytery has with other groups is somewhat weak. In response to Question 8 (“How would you describe the relationship of Presbytery with our church schools, Presbyterian Support, and halls of residence”) the following comments were made:

I think there is little to no relationship with these groups other than a small group for each with church schools; Presbyterian Support; and halls of residence. I don't think this is done well same with the camps- there is little to no relationship or support, even basic things like advertising the holiday camps in the newsletter and Facebook. These events should be shared.

There seems little contact or information about the church schools, some regular updates in the newsletter would be a good start and it would have been good to know about the recent appointment of the new chaplain and if there was a service of induction for them As with the schools there has been very little information about the halls of residences, some communication stories into the newsletter would be a start to address this.

The Church schools and Halls of residence are in Dunedin and so it is difficult for those outside of there to have a view of the Presbytery engagement with them overall. We have been welcomed to John McGlashan College to meet there on occasion and relate to the Chaplain and school there. Relationships with Presbyterian Support Southland is patchy and has seemed to have dropped off recently with the manager having moved away to Dunedin, and as far as we know, no Presbytery appointments to the Board there. This does not seem to be the case with PSO.

Obviously for churches outside of Dunedin little information would be expected. However, recent contact of the convenor with Presbyterian Support Otago was encouraging and suggestive of a very positive future with Presbytery.

Attempts of a team member to contact school chaplains had little success, and likewise it seems as though Southland churches relationships with Presbyterian Support Southland have weakened in recent times (more on the PSS side).

It is hoped that one or more representatives from each group is invited to Regional Gatherings and also to the two annual Presbytery Gatherings, and at least a brief annual update invited from each group for the newsletter.

REVIEW TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strategic Planning

- a. That a person/team of people with knowledge of the PCANZ, and skills in enabling theological reflection, discernment and strategy be invited to work with the Presbytery Council. This person/team would be asked to facilitate a process of discernment leading to the creation of a high level strategic framework/road map for the Presbytery.
- b. That, by December 2023, a clear strategic plan be developed from this work.
- c. The plan would include i) a long term vision to establish a direction of travel and ii) achievable short term (6-12 months) and medium term (3-5 years) goals.

2. Connection

- a. That the Moderator be enabled to take a more active pastoral and network-building role, particularly making connections with smaller and more rural parishes so that they feel supported and linked into the wider church family.
- b. That resourcing for Moderator's travel and reasonable expenses to do this be included in the Presbytery budget.
- c. That parishes be encouraged to link with another parish from a different context and area, to build a relationship that facilitates the sharing of news, prayer and whatever other support that seems appropriate to the churches involved.

3. Resourcing

- a. That funding and other resources (e.g. suggestions of speakers, themes/content for meetings) be made available to help regional groups to function well.
- b. That there is a reconsideration of how many participants are required in larger workgroups with a view to possibly cutting numbers, increasing effectiveness and efficiency and freeing up time and energy for other matters.
- c. That there is a renewed commitment to ensuring that parish reviews are undertaken regularly and effectively, with resourcing provided if and when necessary, as a key means of supporting and encouraging the health and wellbeing of all our congregations.

4. Presbytery gatherings

That Spiritual Renewal and Growth Workgroup work with Moderator to provide content and support for Presbytery Gatherings.

5. Channels of communication

a. Staff:

That staff have clear accountability, regular opportunity to report, and good communication about what they are doing and how they can resource parishes

- i. That they explore how to serve parishes which they have not regularly engaged with.
- ii. That as part of this, a yearly email connection with each parish be made so that parishes are aware of the resources available.

b. Email lists:

- i. That the Presbytery office ensures that its email lists have up-to-date contacts for all parishes (Several emails that the review team sent out to parishes bounced).
- ii. That the email details of any minister coming into the Presbytery and of any new Presbytery elders, and any changes in email details, are automatically passed on to the person responsible for the maintenance of the Presbytery e newsletter email list and to the Synod.

c. Communication etiquette, Presbytery office and Website:

- i. That appropriate standards are established for use of "out of office" replies, timing of responses to emails/phone calls, and that (unless it is inappropriate) the initial emailer is "copied in" when passing on a question to a workgroup convenor or sending out a message to all, etc so that they are assured that something is happening with it.
- ii. That the Website content maintenance is prioritised.
- iii. That consideration be given to disestablishing the FaceBook page as its use is minimal.

6. Presbytery Synod relationship

That both Presbytery and Synod pursue genuine and effective collaboration with humility, a servant heart, a willingness to listen deeply, and the mutual commitment to do this with energy and haste.

Presented to Southern Presbytery Council
on 1st April 2023 by the Review Team:

Rev Dr Alan Missen (Convenor)
Rev Clare Lind
Judith Forbes
Rev Dr Malcolm Gordon

APPENDIX A

Presbytery Review Terms of Reference

The purpose of the review is described in the proposal prepared by the Rev Kerry Enright. This notes:

That it being over ten years since Southern Presbytery was formed, the Presbytery commission an external review of Southern Presbytery, the review team to report to Presbytery with any recommendations of improvements to the performance of the Presbytery concerning:

1. the functions set out in 8.4 and other relevant provisions of the Book of Order;
2. the principles and practices of good governance while taking into account that the Presbytery is a council of the Presbyterian Church (rather than a secular body);
3. the relationship with the Synod of Otago and Southland;
4. the resourcing of the Presbytery in performing its functions.

That the external review include consultation with bodies in the Presbytery area including church councils and Regional Groups, Presbyterian School Boards, Presbyterian Support Otago, Presbyterian Support Southland, the Synod of Otago and Southland, the Assembly Executive Secretary, the Executive Officers of other Presbyteries (including Te Aka Puaho and the Pacific Presbytery) and giving an opportunity for individual feedback.

Presbytery Council adds the following general comments to assist the review team with the above tasks:

- In the work of presbytery there are 5 centres of our workstreams, all interconnected – and the review is asked to consider if this mix of responsibilities is the best fit
- Presbytery Council
- Regional groups – parishes of the previous presbyteries
- Long term Workgroups – Ministry, Candidates, Property, Finance and Nominating committee
- Short term Presbytery Commissions and task groups
- Presbytery Clerk / Executive Officer and regional staff
- The funding of presbytery is a major issue as it is based on levies. As the 10-year overview notes numbers of churches are falling and numbers of members too (20% fall in 10 years). So, we observe the Presbytery is becoming increasingly costly per church and member.
- Numbers of Presbytery members are reducing with settled ministry is declining and number of Presbytery Elders too. These are the two groups that we use to operate Presbytery Council, workgroups and regional group leadership. So, capacity issues need to be considered by the review.
- Not mentioned in the proposal, but important is hearing the voices of those involved in non-ordained ministry roles such as local ministry teams, youth workers, children and family people, community chaplains, ministry interns and probationers.

The Review team is able to determine how to proceed with the review and how to survey various groups for their views. We ask for a progress report at the November 5th Presbytery meeting and a final report with recommendations to the next meeting which is currently expected in May 2023.

APPENDIX B

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REVIEW 2022/23

1. What has been your church's interaction with Presbytery over the last 24 months? (Tick as many as are appropriate, and rate the interaction - 1 terrible → 10 brilliant)
 - a. Southern Headlines (the Presbytery e newsletter)
 - b. Emailed info and notices
 - c. Southern Presbyterians website or Facebook
 - d. Attendance at Presbytery meetings
 - e. Attendance at regional gatherings (i.e. DNO, Equip Central, Equip South)
 - f. Conversation with Presbytery Office
 - g. Input from Presbytery Resourcing staff (Mission, Youth, Children and Families)
 - h. Contact with a Presbytery Work Group (Finance, Property, Ministry, Parish Review, Candidates)
 - i. Contact with a special purpose committee or appointment (eg. Interim Moderator, Ministry Settlement Board, Review team, Commission)
 - j. Contact with your own Regional Group.

2. To what extent do you feel you/your elders/ your church have a meaningful connection with Southern Presbytery?

3. Since the survey prior to 2018, have changes that were made in your opinion improved the operation of Presbytery?
(Circle response: worse; no different; better; fantastic; don't know)

4. From your perspective how well is Presbytery resourcing parishes and ministries in your area through staff, Presbytery Gatherings, and Regional Groups? Can you give specific examples?

5. What is going well with Presbytery?

6. Are there any "gaps" where Presbytery is missing some things?

7. How do you think Presbytery can best be resourced for what it does? I.e. how can it best afford its staff and resourcing?

8. How would you describe the relationship of Presbytery with the Synod of Otago and Southland? With our church schools; Presbyterian Support; and halls of residence?

9. How could Presbytery improve in the future?

APPENDIX C: PARISH REVIEWS

Proposal

That as the Presbytery seeks to fulfill its responsibility to oversee the mission of the congregations for which it has responsibility and in undertaking regular reviews of the congregations for which it has responsibility (Book of Order 8.4 (1)), the existing Presbytery review process be replaced by the review processes set out in this proposal:

1. That the Presbytery adopt two review processes, one primarily for the Presbytery Council relating to governance risks (proposals 2-4), and one primarily for the congregation and the Regional Group relating to ministry and mission (recommendations 5- 12), which may be conducted at the same time.
2. That the Presbytery develop a risk management plan that identifies governance risks relating to church councils that may require addressing by the Presbytery, to help the Presbytery Council decide on Presbytery-wide risk mitigation steps and to prioritise the allocation of resources and opportunities for support of church councils facing significant risks.
3. That at least every five years, the Presbytery Council review church councils in relation to governance risks identified in the Presbytery risk management plan, such reviews to be by way of a questionnaire for church councils to be submitted to the Presbytery Council and, if needed, by way of conversation with the church council.
4. That the purpose of the governance risk review be:
 - to enable the Presbytery to be confident that the congregation is being governed in a way that meets the requirements set out in the Book of Order, especially in paragraph 7.2;
 - to identify any gaps in governance that would put the church at risk (e.g. in relation to health and safety, employment, compliance, unhealthy conflict, property, finance or not prioritising mission) and to take mitigating steps identified in the risk management plan in consultation with the church council;
5. That the purpose of the congregational review be:
 - a) to evaluate and assist in strengthening the ministry and mission of a congregation;
 - b) to enable the congregation to express its views regarding ministry and mission;
 - c) to assist the church council in setting priorities and direction;
 - d) to enable neighbouring congregations to find opportunities for collaboration and mutual support including in prayer;
 - e) to inform the Presbytery Council as it sets priorities and direction for resourcing of congregations and for developing mission in that area.
6. That the Congregational Review Work Group (CRWG) be made up of Regional Group convenors and a member of Presbytery Council.

7. That Regional Groups be responsible for undertaking reviews of congregations that are part of their Regional Group (Dunedin North Otago, Southland, Clutha, Mataura, Central Otago).
8. That the reviews be undertaken by teams of elders and ministers, if necessary with other people with appropriate skills, appointed for each review by the Regional Group.
9. That the review of a congregation be undertaken at least every five years or at other times at the request of the church council, the Regional Group or the Presbytery.
10. That every minister and church council be asked to commit to provide personnel to enable reviews to be undertaken (anticipating that every minister and a proportion of elders over a period of time will be involved in reviews - including when their own congregation is being reviewed).
11. That the review team report in writing the findings of the review to the church council, the congregation, the Regional Group and the Presbytery Council.
12. That the Congregational Review Work Group (CRWG) ensure consistency of approach across the Presbytery, provide resources to enable the reviews to be undertaken and monitor follow-up of the findings of reviews.
13. That Presbytery Council make productive use of the review reports in developing the priorities and directions of the Presbytery.

In discussion the follow perspectives were noted:

- ✓ DNO regional group would struggle to resource the additional responsibilities in the proposal. This was echoed by the Mataura Valley regional group.
- ✓ Some of the specifics are not able to address the issues that have been noted.
- ✓ Several asked this be referred to Presbytery Council before decisions made.
- ✓ Some thought that the proposal was suitable as it stands.
- ✓ Suggestion that the external review of the whole Presbytery already approved could include the issues around congregational reviews.

It was moved by Kerry Enright, sec Mike Kirkby-Sing That this proposal be adopted
The motion was put and it was agreed.

Southern Presbytery Meeting
11th June 2022

APPENDIX D

Southern Presbytery Workgroups Feedback

This is an opportunity for Workgroup Members to tell the Review team how things are going.

Contact can be made directly with the Review team by emailing Alan Missen: awmissen@xtra.co.nz

[Sign in to Google](#) to save your progress. [Learn more](#)

***Required**

Which Workgroup are you a part of?

Your answer

How effectively is your Workgroup operating?*

Your answer

What are some specific strengths and challenges regarding your workgroup?*

Your answer

Do you have the right configuration of people and skills in your Workgroup? If not, what might work better?*

Your answer

Any other comments?

Your answer