

Bendigo Uniting Church Network

By the end of 2010 there remained only one minister in placement in the whole of Bendigo.

In order to ensure that ministers could be found to meet the need the Presbytery, through its Presbytery Ministers, engaged in conversations with Congregations throughout Bendigo.

It was obvious that clergy would not be willing to come to Bendigo in order to take up small part-time ministries. A new framework for the relationships between Bendigo congregations arose in terms of congregations forming clusters. (Bendigo South had successfully operated in a cluster mode for some years.)

Four clusters were formed based, in some measure, on geographical location. Those clusters eventually chose their names which are: Central Bendigo Churches; Bendigo North East; Bendigo South; and ELM (an acronym based on the three congregations involved: Eaglehawk, Long Gully, Marong).

The Presbytery also suggested that a body representing the clusters along with representatives from the Uniting Church agencies working in Bendigo, with the Uniting Church Hospital Chaplain be formed. The first meeting of that body was held on 8th December 2010.

Presbytery meanwhile had resolved to set up six Networks within its bounds and that the Bendigo congregations would form one such network. That has led to the representative body – once known as the Bendigo Uniting Church Consultative Council - being re-named Bendigo Uniting Church Network.