

# **The Anglican Parish of Colac**

## Parish Profile 2019





Image 1 - State of Victoria, highlighting location of Colac.

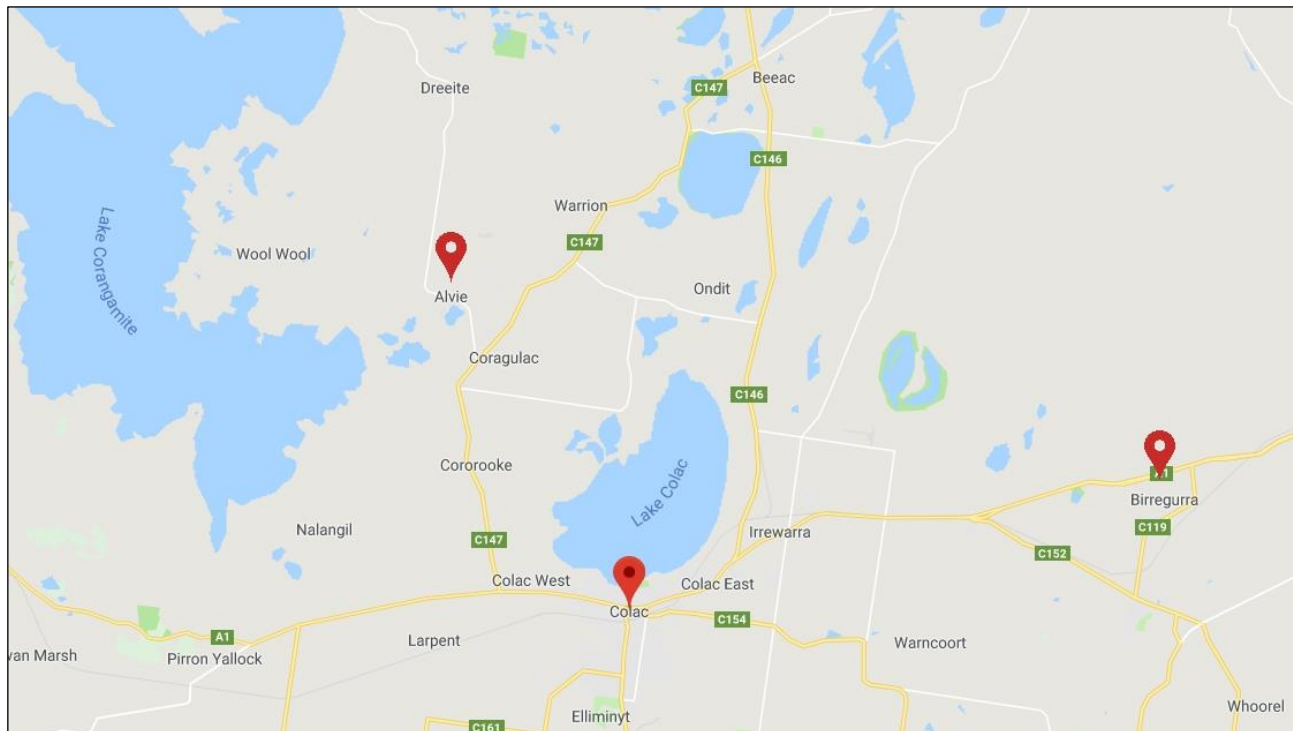


Image 2 - Showing Parish Centres, Colac, Birregurra and Alvie.



## The Community

Colac is close to the centre of the parish. It has a population of about 12, 000, serving a district of more than 14,000. It is built between Lake Colac and the Otways in south-west Victoria.



Image 3 - Colac, View down Murray Street.

Colac is situated about an hour's travel from the ocean, from Geelong, Ballarat, and Warrnambool (See Images 1 & 2). Currently, dual carriageway between Geelong and Colac is more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  constructed. It is expected that the road will be completed during 2019. Colac and Birregurra are situated on the Melbourne to Warrnambool railway line. The trains have increased in frequency in recent years, and further increases are expected with further development of the area.

Birregurra (a 20 minute drive from Colac), is a growing town, with a number of people moving into the area. Alvie (a 15 minute drive from Colac) is one of a number of small rural communities set closely together. Both of these places have a strong community feeling.

Whilst this is largely a farming area with emphasis on dairying, Colac has three substantial industries. The Australian Lamb Company has a world-class facility that employs more than 700 people. AKD runs a softwood and pallet-making works, and has recently expanded again. Bulla milk processing and ice-cream factory is also expanding at present.

There are two large medical practices and several smaller ones along with a hospital of an appropriate size for the area serving the health of the community. A local appeal has increased the range of specialists and treatment options available without travelling. There are three nursing home facilities and a hospice in Colac. There are two large dental practices.

There are several government and Catholic primary schools throughout the parish along with a specialist school. In addition there is a government secondary college and a large Catholic secondary college. TAFE studies are available through the secondary schools as well as through the Brotherhood of St Laurence facility. Turning Point, Ignition Point and Glastonbury also have programs in the area.



Image 4 - Aerial View of Lake Colac



As in many country areas, sport is an important community activity in this locality. Football and netball are very popular, with cricket and tennis scarcely less so. There is a reasonable variety of other sports, some examples being shooting, bowls (both lawn and 10-pin), basketball and baseball. Colac has three gyms, one of which includes the swimming pool. The swimming club is both active and successful. With the stabilising of Lake Colac water levels, sailing and rowing are gaining in popularity.



Image 5 - Colac Botanical Gardens

There are active service clubs, as well as opportunities to participate in visual, dramatic and musical arts. Local and family historians are active. There is a two-screen cinema and a civic hall at COPAC. Colac hosts some excellent live theatre and music.

The shopping centre is quite large (for instance, there are four supermarkets and an Asian grocery), although the centre is currently facing change along with the national retail sector.

Because of the employment opportunities available, the area has a growing ethnic diversity. Migrants and people with work permits are contributing more to the town.



## Parish Facilities



Image 6 - Ss John's Colac, external. Also see Image on front page..

**Ss Johns' Church Colac** is 125 years old. It is built of brick, and was extensively refurbished in 1991. This added some room for flexibility in liturgy. The parish hall was modernized in 2010, and now contains a commercial kitchen and the parish office as well as three meeting spaces. There is a smallish debt still owed on this work



Image 7, Ss Johns Colac, internal.



Image 8, Ss Johns Colac Hall



**Christ Church, Birregurra** is a bluestone church, built in 1870. It has a National Trust classification. It has a substantial parish hall. Its grounds feature a newly created labyrinth.



Image 9 - Christ Church Birregurra, external, featuring the 'Labyrinth'



Image 10 - Christ Church Birregurra, internal.



**St Andrew's, Alvie** is a solid brick country church, built 112 years ago. It has a small Sunday School/ fellowship hall.



Image 11 - St Andrew's Alvie, external.



Image 12 - St Andrew's Alvie, internal

**The Rectory in Colac** is a two storey sandstone building which was completely renovated in 1993 and recarpeted etc. in 2009. It has 4 bedrooms, a study and a double carport. There is a backyard for children to play in or for a gardener to enjoy. It has a substantial garden shed.



Images 13 & 14 - The Rectory, external front and garden

**The Assistant Priest's residence**, known as St Martin's Place, was built approximately 19 years ago. It has 3 bedrooms, a study and a double garage. Currently it is rented out.

These two residences abut the church grounds.

In 2004, in **Ss Johns' Close** (behind the church), four units for the aged were completed under the Retirement Village Act. A fifth and final unit was built in 2011. Profit generated from the sale of these units is, in the short term, used to decrease our capital debt.

The parish also owns a 2 bedroom unit which is also rented out.

Overall, buildings are in reasonable condition, although maintenance is being planned for the rectory and for Ss. Johns.



## Parish Service Times

Our current Service Times are:

Colac                      Every Sunday at 8am and 11am

Alvie                      Every first and third Sunday at 9.30am

Birregurra              Every second and fourth Sunday at 9.30am

In addition to Sunday services, some congregation members benefit from frequent attendance at Eucharist in Colac. These services include:

- a weekly service at Mercy Aged Care Facility,
- a fortnightly service at Barongarook Aged Care Hostel
- and a monthly service at Corangamarah Nursing Home

## Parish Activities

- A small Guild of St Raphael meets and prays regularly. The dedicated hospital visitors work as a team, to be sure that all who care to be visited have that experience.
- A play group is held weekly at Ss Johns' Colac during term time, serving families of several ethnicities.
- A Bible Study group meets weekly, and an extra one serves the larger numbers meeting during Lent and Advent.
- A monthly parish Luncheon has been a feature of parish life for several years.
- Twice a year, quiet days are held at St Mark's Abbey, Camperdown. In recent years these have been in conjunction with Diocesan quiet days.
- There is a newly built labyrinth in the garden of Christ Church Birregurra which is open to parish and community use.

- There is an Anglican Women's Guild at Birregurra, and a combined one from Alvie and Colac. Both work energetically and generously for the welfare of the parish.
- There is an annual parish fete and a Christmas fete.
- A catering group offers refreshments after funerals and other occasions. Further, there is a group of "fundraisers" who arrange special events. These activities involve many people, and the proceeds add substantially to the parish income.
- Over the last few years the parish has hosted some lovely concerts, including performances from the Cologne Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, "Liminality", the Geelong Chorale and the Colac Chorale.
- The parish has fielded a team in the Anti-Cancer Council's 'Relay for Life' since the event was first staged in Colac.
- Ss Johns' Close consists of 5 retirement units. The Management Committee is made up of parishioners, and the parish also provides some pastoral care for the residents.
- The parish seeks to focus upon the underprivileged of our community through donations to local concerns, and through many hours of volunteer time in our localities.



## **What are we looking for in a Parish Priest?**

We are looking for an energetic priest with a youthful outlook and enough experience to handle a complex and very busy parish. The Anglican Parish of Colac has traditionally had married priests. Our preference is for this to continue.

The priest should be of somewhat Anglo-Catholic views, and fairly conservative, although of course some change and liturgical experimentation would be reasonable.

The parish expects the priest to participate (and often lead) in parish activities, and hopes that the priest would take a role in the general community as an advocate for the disadvantaged. It is assumed that the priest would find ways to continue to minister to and co-operate with the Sudanese people from the congregation and beyond.

For many years, the Anglican priest has held the position of Police Chaplain. We would like that to continue if possible.

Ministry to the housebound and within the city's aged care facilities is a basic requirement. Currently, a small but devoted team of lay people ensure that this work is done regularly, and the priest must, of course, contribute in this team.

Regarding ministry to young families, they always need the loving and understanding guidance of a good pastor. How this is expressed is a matter for discussion.

We are very aware of the limitation on parochial visiting caused by time constraints, but we see potential in the priest leading a structured lay team to ease much of this burden, although we recognise that the priest may discern times when a visit should come from him.

There are many in the parish who value the role of music within liturgy and in their lives beyond. If a priest could contribute to this aspect of parish life it would be highly valued.

The Anglican Parish of Colac is a demanding one, but there are many parishioners who play a role in meeting that demand. A priest in Colac will be expected to lead an existing team of capable administrators.

We pray that a priest of strong faith and clear understanding of the needs of the whole Church will join us in the work.

## **Some ideas about the future**

- A. We would like more people to participate in training or study to
  - 1. Ensure that everyone has the chance to grow in faith
  - 2. Make sure that all rostered duties are carried out as well as possible.
- B. We need to look at formalising the pastoral care activities so that no-one misses out.
- C. We need to find ways to encourage participation among our 'absentee' young people.
- D. We need to retain and develop our links with the wider community in each of our 3 centres.
- E. We need to decrease our level of debt as quickly as possible, as this will permit greater discretionary spending.



## Appendix - Survey

*A brief 'straw poll' survey was conducted in December 2018 and the results followed these trends:*

Most did not find the gender or marital status of a new priest issues to be considered. Even fewer cared about the family make-up for the ideal priest.

There was a full range of viewpoint expressed on churchmanship, a small majority being in favour of an Anglo-Catholic, but with almost as many giving no view.

There was a feeling that an interest in youth work would be useful, though definition of this was not clear.

Other things which people mentioned as priorities are accessibility on pastoral matters, having a supportive partner, visiting housebound elderly and 'our friends who need peace of mind', openness to suggestions / preparedness to explore new ideas, answering community needs, participation with church activities, initiating special events such as family services, guest speakers, bus trips.

In general, parishioners see music as important to parish life. They would like more choral concerts and recitals, and internally, more frequent singing during communion and hymns with sound theology expressed.

The perfect church times question drew equal numbers of votes for the status quo and for earlier times. A couple of people suggested the possibility of a late afternoon or evening service (with a meal). Someone advocated a variety of days for services.

People's views on community involvement are as follows: We should see more of our local leaders, try to answer community need by volunteering, leading where necessary, treat everyone with kindness, smile, have more ecumenical fellowship, hold functions including parish lunches to which we can invite others, invite people to church (but someone points out, we'd have to change "church" if that was to succeed).

Thoughts for the future included need to support the priest, to be positive, to accept that change is necessary, to be open to the god of unity, to visit lapse Anglicans, to get to know more people in the broader community, to have a priest-led workshop to discuss possibilities, to ensure that outchurch parishioners feel that they are valued, to place more emphasis on the whole Bible, in modern language.

*This document is included for interest's sake. We are aware that no coherent personality could tackle a fraction of these!*

