

E17: PressGo

Recommendations

1. That General Assembly establish a task group to consider the Church's collective wealth and establish a theology and practice of sharing property and money.
2. That this task group to consider the Church's collective wealth consult widely within the Church and make recommendations to the 2020 Assembly for a national strategy for sharing resources.

Report

The PressGo Board was established by General Assembly 2008 to support the growth of the church by facilitating processes to support new and innovative mission and outreach in New Zealand. To that end, the Board administers mission funding and provides practical advice and support to presbyteries and local faith communities. There are three strands to PressGo's work: inspiring mission, capacity building and seed funding.

Inspiring Mission

In 2017, the PressGo Catalyst, Lisa Wells, presented the story of Nawton Church, a case study in community mission, to the Australian Association of Mission Studies (AAMS) Conference in Melbourne. This provided the opportunity to meet with colleagues at the Uniting Church and discuss alternative models of mission funding which had provided the catalyst for significant intentional change across the Victoria-Tasmania Synod, which is comparable in size to the whole of the Presbyterian Church. The case study later became part of the Knox Centre for Mission and Leadership's publication "Snapshots in Mission" and developed further into content for a webinar series.

Later that year, the Catalyst was invited to attend the Uniting Church's Rural Churches Conference in Dubbo, NSW as keynote speaker. This was another opportunity to make connections, especially with the Mission and Education structures. There were many things we learnt from each other and they have become part of the PressGo "toolbox" used to inspire and encourage congregations locally. It is good to share with our neighbours!

We look forward to more invitations within NZ to "light fires" and "fan flames" in churches that are just beginning the process of thinking about their mission as they begin to discern where God is calling them to be at this time in this land.

Capacity building

The Board believes it has an important role to play in supporting presbyteries to enable them to effectively resource congregations. We encourage presbyteries to work together to share knowledge, resources, research, creativity and support which we believe will lead to a more creative, consistent and coherent approach to mission planning and action across the Church. The PressGo Catalyst also works with local congregations on issues of sustainability, missional imagination, stewardship, project feasibility, discernment, planning and development of new missional initiatives.

To enhance the work of the PressGo Catalyst at a presbytery level, we have developed a programme of face-to-face gatherings for those in regional roles focussing on mission planning, advice or initiation. The aim is to develop this group of people as a resource to the whole church. Through forming a learning community each person will be well supported, develop new skills and undergo professional development in areas relevant to their role. Learning Communities provide peer-based accountability because “as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” (Proverbs 27:17)

Seed funding

Since the last Assembly, until the time of writing, the Board has approved a total of 28 grants from the funds it administers. Annual Reports are published each financial year and report on our activities to the church. They are available on-line and limited numbers are circulated as hard copies.

The **Mission Enterprise Fund** was established following the decision of the 2014 Assembly.

We are very grateful for churches that have contributed to the fund through the sale of property – this enables a wider sharing within the PCANZ and makes it possible for us to fund projects which help growth and vitality, focus on serving the wider community and demonstrate compassion and care for those who are marginalised. A total of \$984,500 has been either distributed or committed from the MEF since GA16. As at 31 May 2018 the total MEF stands at \$890,495 with commitments of \$635,000 making the total available funds \$255,495.

The following grants have been made:

- Knox-Oroua Church, Feilding – contribution to developing a Learning Community
- Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership – towards new initiative project planning
- St Andrew’s Church, Marton – support of a youth and community initiative
- Bethlehem Community Church, Tauranga – Building for the Future and new mission projects
- New Mission Seedlings – funds set aside for NMS developed in each Presbytery in partnership with a local church and KCML
- Christchurch North & Village Church – Village Well initiative based in Papanui

- Clevedon Community Church – extension of HATCH congregation project
- Whakatu Presbyterian, Nelson – Minister for Local Mission
- St John’s Church, Hastings – Community Pastor
- Mahurangi Presbyterian Church, Warkworth – building / mission projects

The **Aroha** grant fund, which receives 20% of the MEF income, makes grants to support ministry among vulnerable and socially disadvantaged communities. It is administered by the PressGo Board in consultation with Te Aka Puaho and the local Presbyterian Support office. Since GA16, one project has been funded and \$109,610 committed over 3 years. As at 31 May 2018 the total MEF Aroha fund stands at \$213,790.

- Whakatane Church, with support of Te Aka Puaho and Presbyterian Support Northern – Te Taurahere Whatumanawa (Heartstrings) Initiative in Taneatua

The 2016 General Assembly agreed that oversight of the Presbyterian Foundation funds be moved to PressGo. As at 31 May 2018, the total funds available for distribution, less forward commitments, stand at \$72,583. Small grants of up to \$10,000 or 50% of the project are funded through the Presbyterian Foundation and \$98,500 has been provided since GA16:

- Christchurch North / Kiwi Church – 3DM training
- Mahurangi Presbyterian Church – 24/7 Youth work
- Nawton Church – Community ministry
- East Taieri Church – Strengthening Families project
- Equip South – Southern restructure investigation
- Fairfield Discovery Church – Community Mission Co-ordinator
- Waiuku & districts – English Conversation group
- St James Whanganui – Youth Worker
- Whakatane Church – Heart to Heart Expo
- St Clare’s Co-operating – Bottletop Café
- Mangere PI Church – Family Camp
- Mangapapa Union – Youth Worker
- St Heliers Church – Cultural Ambassador
- Onehunga Co-operating – PI Youth initiative
- St Andrew’s Hastings – PI Youth Initiative
- Mairangi & Castor Bays – Indian outreach

Future work

The Board is committed to PressGo not being seen merely as a funding body, but as a resource for the PCANZ’s growth and sustainability.

The PressGo Catalyst, with the involvement of Board members where possible, actively engages with congregations to help them clarify the issues they are facing and then to discern, refine or develop their vision and identify the resources they require to attain it.

The Board is aware that the funds it administers are limited and only a small part of the total resources of the PCANZ. It will require courage to release the significant financial resources held by our congregations and presbyteries, but we are willing to partner with them to create ways for this to happen.

The Board has affirmed its reluctance to fund building projects unless they are clearly integral to the development of a new mission initiative. Our focus is on people, not buildings.

We believe that a church-wide conversation about the PCANZ's collective wealth along with developing resources on the theology of sharing, property and money would be timely. Accordingly, we recommend that General Assembly establish a workgroup to facilitate these conversations and report back to GA20 with a national strategy for sharing resources. We respectfully request that PressGo be asked to provide leadership in this workgroup and the subsequent conversation.

Thank you to the Board members and associates who give so generously of their time and skills to our work. It is an exciting and rewarding area of the PCANZ's life to be involved in and we do not take for granted the responsibility we have to do this work with wisdom, imagination, transparency and integrity.

The Board particularly wants to acknowledge the work of Andrew Norton, a 'founding member' of the Board and its Convenor since 2014. Andrew stepped down as Board Chair in 2018. He has invested significant time and skill into the role and we are grateful for his vision, wisdom and leadership.

Sharon Ross Ensor
Acting Chair
PressGo Board