

# Anglican Parish of St George the Martyr Queenscliff & St James Point Lonsdale

*Enlivened by the mystery which is Christ in us,  
in solidarity with communities near and far,  
we will make the word of God fully known*

## Parish Profile: August 2022

Parish Office: 1 Albert Street, Point Lonsdale 3225 Tel. 03 5258 4624

Website: [www.queenscliffionsdaleanglican.org](http://www.queenscliffionsdaleanglican.org)

St George the Martyr: cnr Mercer & Hobson Streets, Queenscliff

St James: 1 Albert Street, Point Lonsdale

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## Introduction

The Anglican Parish of St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale is a long name to describe a small, but active Anglican community. As our Parish Historian, Carole Barwick described in her history of *Anglicans in the Borough 1865 - 2016*,

“The story of Anglicans in the Borough is a narrative of three churches, two congregations, one parish, then two separate parishes in 1951, and now one parish again, created under new parish governance legislation in March 2015.”<sup>1</sup>

In this Parish Profile, we are essentially gathering information from Parish documents that together introduce the Parish history and where we are now in terms of parishioners, parish life and parish assets. The conclusions of recent and thorough parish consultations importantly inform our understanding of the Parish today and or plans for the future.

Insights into the demographic, social and economic contexts of the Borough of Queenscliffe and the surrounding district can be gained from exploring the results of the 2021 Census for the Parish postcode, 3225<sup>2</sup>. However, participation in the Parish extends beyond the townships of Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale into the broader Bellarine Peninsula and Geelong districts and also includes seasonal holiday makers and part-time residents.

Not only is the Parish rich in history and continues to be an active, committed and mutually supportive faith community, we also look forward to a challenging and exciting future together.

For further reference and detail, the following documents are downloadable from the Parish website:

<https://www.queenscliffionsdaleanglican.org> under “Links and documents” and “History and Archives”

Or available in hard copy from the Parish Office, 1 Albert Street Point Lonsdale, tel: 03 5258 4624

Anglican Parish of St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale, *Mission Action Plan [MAP] 2017-2025*, Updated as “*Re-imagining the Future*”, Feb-April 2022

- *Questionnaire Results*, Notes prepared by Sally Hawkins, Treasurer & Parish Councillor, June 2022
- *Parish Consultation: Gill Hall, St James Point Lonsdale, 25 June 2022*, Convened by Archdeacon Jill McCoy, Notes prepared by Fiona Lindsay, Warden & Secretary
- Anglican Parish of St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale, *Annual Report, 2021*
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 3225, *Vic; 2021 Census, All Persons QuickStats*
- Carol Barwick, *Anglicans in the Borough 1865-2016*, [2016]

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<sup>1</sup>Carol Barwick, *Anglicans in the Borough 1865 - 2016 p. 1 Presentation to Queenscliff Historical Museum, June 2016*

<sup>2</sup>Australian Bureau of Statistics 3225, *Vic; 2021 Census, All Persons QuickStats*

- Lindsay Howe, *A Short History of Our Parish, St George the Martyr and St James Point Lonsdale*, [2021]
- History Project, *The Biography of a Congregation, St James Anglican Church Point Lonsdale 1915-2015*
- *History of St George the Martyr Anglican Church Queenscliff* (undated)
- *The Stained Glass Windows of St George the Martyr, A Photographic Record* (2009)

Websites to explore:

- Parish website - <https://www.queenscliffonsdaleanglican.org>
- Borough of Queenscliffe website - <https://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/Home>

Provides information about Council Services and numerous community, business and service links,

- Including <https://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/Things-to-do/Directories>

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## The Parish - Now

The Parish of St James and St George is based in the attractive seaside villages of Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff on the Bellarine Peninsula. Together they form the smallest municipality in Victoria, the Borough of Queenscliffe, with a population of more than 5000 people. Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale are often characterised as rather exclusive summer holiday destinations or enclaves for wealthy retirees; fortunately, the realities of the communities today bely these stereotypes as there is a core of longterm residents, working people and relocating younger families.

The Parish Roll included 71 members at the end of September 2021, with an additional 26 participating parishioners on our circulation list. A further 50 people also receive the weekly Newsletter, *Lovers of the Place*. Weekly congregations fluctuate from 12-14 to 28-32 each week and generally average about 20 attendees. Numbers swell to 80 to 120 at Christmas and Easter. School holidays, especially over summer and Easter, bring additional family members and holiday makers to our congregation.

Parishioners come from:

Point Lonsdale	65
Queenscliff	13
District, inc Geelong	11
Melbourne suburbs	5
Rural/regional	3
Total:	97

Two-thirds of the Parish contact list are women, approximately 26 people are single-person households and approximately 7 people live in local aged care.

### **Current worship**

There is one Sunday Service at 10.00am, followed by Morning Tea. Live-streaming was setup during COVID and enabled a number of people beyond the Parish to join us. Services are available to watch at other times via a link on the Parish website. During the interregnum there is Morning and Evening Prayer via Zoom, a meditation group and no Wednesday Service. Lenten Studies are also held each year.

### **Two sites - one congregation**

The Parish resolved in 2015 to merge St George the Martyr in Queenscliff with St James at Point Lonsdale to become one Parish - the Parish of St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale, commonly referred to as the "Parish of Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale" and abbreviated as QLA. All six properties were retained, so we have two churches, two Parish Halls and two vicarages. Worship is rotated each month as there is just five kilometres between the churches.

Similarly, working bees change with the place of worship each month and people generally volunteer in both locations.

Most parishioners can manage the alternating attendance, but the comfort of St George's is compromised by old and inconvenient outside toilets and the church is difficult to keep warm in winter.

An important priority for St George's is to include an accessible toilet in both the church and in the Old School.

### **Property arrangements**

The former Queenscliff vicarage is leased out through an agent as a private residence. The former Pointy Lonsdale vicarage currently houses an office and gathering space, plus a two bedroom retreat house, known as The House of Prayer. An additional bedroom with ensuite is attached to the gathering space. [See site and floor plan for St James]

During 2021/22, Parish Council resolved to make this property available through a local agent as a holiday rental, while continuing to offer it as the House of Prayer at other times.

Gill Hall at St James has regular groups for yoga, meditation and patch-working and is sometimes used for quiet days or retreats by other parishes, especially the Karen community from St Stephens, Werribee.

The Old School at St George's is used occasionally for concerts and exhibitions and leases one room or small hall as a studio space for local artists. The church and hall are occasionally used by the Coptic Church and their youth group during the year.

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## Where we live

### **Census 2021: Summary for postcode 3225, Borough of Queenscliffe**

A summary of the latest census in 2021 indicates 5408 people live in the Borough and that 14.1% of the population identifies as Anglican [cf. 6.5 % for Victoria]. Our congregation reflects the older population profile for the postcode area where the median age is 61 years. Significantly, 43.3% of the Borough population is aged 70 and over compared with 11.9% for the state. In terms of cultural diversity, the composition of Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale has changed little: Anglo-Celtic -Australian heritages are the most prevalent cultural affiliations, accounting for 118.3% of the population [respondents could report up to two ancestries]. This contrasts with 74% for Victoria as a whole. 82% of Borough residents were born in Australia, compared with 65% for the state.

Further data about housing, income and household composition are found in the link to the *ABS QuickStats report for postcode 3225*.

[Home](#) [Census](#) [Find Census data](#) [Search Census data](#) 2021 3225, VIC, Census All persons QuickStats

### **A younger, growing population**

The most significant and exciting shift in population is occurring right now, within the Borough and the surrounding growth areas of Greater Geelong, especially The Point, which is adjacent to Point Lonsdale. In some ways, The Parish is a beneficiary of the Covid-19 pandemic as people look to relocate from urban Melbourne, employment in the Geelong Region is growing and working from home is a realistic option for many. The permanent population will grow over the next five years as estate housing developments are built. For example, approximately 300 dwellings will be completed in The Point. Second, the population profile will trend slightly younger as families with dependent children settle as permanent residents. The booming growth in Queenscliff Primary School during the last decade from 6-8 students in 2012 to approximately 145 students today highlights these changes. The local childcare centre and kindergarten have waiting lists and Point Lonsdale Primary School anticipates its rapid growth will commence in the next two years as new housing is completed.

The Borough of Queenscliffe produces a comprehensive Information Kit for new residents every few years and it is currently being updated. It will be accessible on the Council website:

<https://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au/Home>

However, the Council website remains a great starting point to get a “feel” for life in the Borough.

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## History

The History Room for the Parish is located in Gill Hall, St James. We are privileged to have the resources of an historian and an archivist who volunteer one day a week. An impressive outcome of their collaboration is that the Parish now has all documents up until 2016 catalogued and searchable online. The database is linked to the Parish website.

Image of St George the Martyr & the Old School late 19th century

Image of St James Point Lonsdale: the original timber & stucco

*A Short History of Our Parish* was prepared by our Archivist, Lindsay Howe, in 2021 and helpfully summarises the evolution of the Parish from one, to two and back to one entity over a period of 160 years. From grand beginnings, in part as a garrison church for Fort Queenscliff and generously endowed by Dr Thomas Fellows, local politician and later a Judge of the Supreme Court, St George's epitomised the "Church Triumphant" of the new colony of Victoria. Of particular beauty are the large stained glass windows behind the altar telling the story of Jesus over 15 panels. Once again, it was Dr Fellows who donated the funds for the windows.<sup>3</sup> In her speech to launch the campaign to raise further funds for the St George's Restoration Appeal in June 2022, Mrs Val Lawrence described how it was these windows that first drew her to worship in St George's 50 years ago as a young woman when her husband was appointed to Army Signals in Queenscliff.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Stained Glass Windows of St George the Martyr Queenscliff (2009)

<sup>4</sup> Val Lawrence - speech to launch the Restoration Appeal for St George the Martyr, Queenscliff, June 2022

In contrast, the construction of St James followed years of community subscriptions and was “debt free when dedicated by the Archbishop of Melbourne in September 1915”<sup>5</sup>.

### **St George’s Restoration Appeal**

The rich history of St George the Martyr in Queenscliff and its historic precinct have resulted in the church being classified by the National Trust. Both the church and Old School are listed as buildings of State Significance.

Image of Launch of the Restoration Appeal, June 2022

L-R: Parish Councillors: Mrs Val Lawrence OAM, JP, Patron: Archdeacon Jill McCoy

The Church was opened in 1864 and it continues to be loved and cherished by the community. Restoration work has commenced on the Tower as the first two stages of an eight-stage project that is scheduled to be completed in 2030. The Parish is determined the Restoration Project will be funded from grants, donations or bequests as we are in no position to find \$5million plus from Parish resources. We look to the broader community to share responsibility for fundraising and we are fortunate to have the support of two patrons who will be part of this journey: Mrs Val Lawrence OAM and JP, parishioner and retired Borough Mayor and Mr Ted Baillieu AO, former Premier of Victoria.

We look to securing the future of St George the Martyr as a place of worship and community activity for many generations to come.

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<sup>5</sup> Lindsay Howe, *A Short History of Our Parish*, page 4 (2021)



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## Strengths & Challenges

The Mission Action Plan (MAP) 2017-2025 was updated through the process of “Re-Imagining the Future” from February to April 2022. <sup>6</sup> In it, our intentions are simply outlined: to deepen the life of our parish community and extend our outreach to families and the community; to extend our programs of hospitality; to be part of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) and to build our ability to resource our responsibilities.

Further Parish discussions followed to encourage parishioners to share their thoughts about the current and future Parish. From these lively discussions and a questionnaire, the following issues emerged as important:

### **Strengths**

The report generated from the Parish Consultation<sup>7</sup> summarises what is valued by our parishioners. These include:

- All elements of the Sunday Service; hymns and music; live-streaming the service
- The church buildings themselves
- Opportunities for social gatherings, such as morning tea after the Sunday Service

In addition, each Parish Councillor has identified what they believe to be the strengths of the Parish. These include:

- Outreach to formal and informal parishioners, including outreach to elderly parishioners, the weekly Newsletter, and online streaming
- Offering our facilities to the wider community eg. Halls
- Fundraising and parishioners involvement in this
- Welcoming new and returning parishioners to worship
- More parishioners are prepared to help, for example with working bees and fundraising
- There is active support from the community, for example, the Borough Council
- Our two beautiful churches that are valued by our parishioners and of which we are very proud
- Parish Council itself is a collaborative, supportive and friendly working group that is attentive to fellow parishioners and supportive of the locum priest.

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<sup>6</sup> Anglican Parish of St George the Martyr Queenscliff and St James Point Lonsdale, *Mission Action Plan (MAP) April 2022* (Attachment 1, p 13)

<sup>7</sup> Notes of Parish Consultations, June 2022 (Attachment 2, p 16 & Attachment 3, p 22)

## Image of Successful fundraising, Christmas 2021

### **Challenges**

Not surprisingly, the common thread identified by parishioners that links many of the challenges to the life and future of the Parish concerns money: “How can the parish continue to support two churches, two halls and two residences?”

Parish councillors echoed these concerns and also added:

- The elderly profile of our parishioners
- The willingness of parishioners to help is compromised by age and frailty
- Our monthly income seldom matches our monthly salary commitments, let alone additional money for property maintenance
- The restoration project at St George’s Queenscliff has the potential to deflect time and resources from essential work in the parish

However, the comments made in the parish consultations also indicate that parishioners are giving a lot of thought to how the financial stability and longterm viability of the parish may be achieved, including the sale of property, if required.

## Image of setting up for the Parish Consultation in Gill Hall, June 2022

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### The hard data

#### **Assets**

The Parish is responsible for two beautiful sites in Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale, each of which contains three substantial buildings.

**St George the Martyr in Queenscliff** is the older, larger church (1862). It is built of local limestone, has a bell tower, a Fincham organ and magnificent stained glass windows. The site is bounded by Mercer, Hobson and Learmonth Streets, one block behind the main street. It contains a park of

substantial European trees, some of which are said to have been planted by Baron von Mueller in the mid 19th century. Down the hill from the church, which is at the top of the hill on Mercer Street, there is the former vicarage, built in the 1960s, and the Parish Hall, usually called the Old School, that faces Learmonth Street. The Old School includes two small halls, a large foyer and large kitchen that can cater for up to 100 people.

St George's is classified by the National Trust and is heritage listed as a building of state significance, as is the Old School. A major restoration project has commenced for the church, but funds for this must come from grants and donations (see above, page 7).

**St James in Point Lonsdale** was constructed in 1915. It is a small, timber-lined and simple church that was faced with brick in the 1980s. At this time, the site in Albert Street was completed with a new Parish Hall (Gill Hall) and a comfortable 3-4 bedroom vicarage. St James is idyllically situated just one house from the beachfront. Gill Hall is well set up as a public space with a good kitchen and capacity to cater for 100 people.

### **Financial position<sup>8</sup>**

Our intention is to have a full time Priest in our Parish. When we combined our two Parishes (Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale) in 2015 to become one Parish, we retained two places of worship, two halls and two Vicarages. This is a significant strain on our finances due to the ongoing maintenance and upkeep. At present we commercially rent the Queenscliff Vicarage and the Point Lonsdale Vicarage is used as an office and the House of Prayer. The House of Prayer brings in a modest income. The Point Lonsdale Vicarage is now flagged to be the Vicarage for the new incumbent.

Our income relies on sacrificial giving, donations, fundraising and bequests. Presently, this money does not cover the monthly payroll and operational costs of the Parish.

The Parishioners are aware of our financial position and do what they can to support us.

We also have rental income from the commercial rent from the Queenscliff Vicarage and currently we lease the Art Studio in the Old School House. This lease will be up for renewal in November, 2022, and will be discussed with the new incumbent before any decision is made about future usage. We also rent the two halls to the community for various activities. We have just recently commercially rented the Point Lonsdale vicarage over summer and other holiday periods. This gave us a significant income in 2022 which helped us cover our costs for a few months.

We have started to ask for specific donations for things such as maintenance at St James Church. We have a data base of people who we also can approach who aren't necessarily Parishioners but have a strong link with the place and are keen to contribute to it being maintained. We did this when we started live-streaming and needed to buy the necessary equipment and this allowed us to purchase everything we required to set up for live-streaming over Covid.

We have Endowment Funds of \$94,452.91.

We are presently undertaking the project of restoring St George's the Martyr in Queenscliff. We currently have a small loan on which we pay interest.

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<sup>8</sup> *Annual Report, 2021* is downloadable from the Parish website, <https://www.queenscliffionsdaleanglican.org> "Links & Documents"