More than just food and blankets:
the role of local parish churches in community resilience in response to specific and general threats.

By Julie Ward

Diploma of Applied Science (Podiatry) (Curtin University 1984)
Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (Politics and International Studies) (Murdoch University 2000)
Master of Teaching (Secondary) (University of Notre Dame 2004)
Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainability (Urban and Regional Planning) (Murdoch University 2014)

This dissertation is presented for the degree of Master of Sustainable Development 2019
Declaration

I declare that this is my own account of my research and the work contained within has not been previously submitted for a degree at any university.

Julie Ellen Ward
Student number: 19440237
Abstract

In times of disaster, local churches often respond to community need and provide physical needs, such as food and blankets. Intangible needs such as a safe place, opportunities for symbolic actions like lighting a candle, wanting to help others, and face-to-face interactions, are also sought from churches. The assumption that the local church meets these needs in response to a specific threat to the community suggests an invisible connection between a church and a community.

The main aim of this research was to evaluate the general and specific community resilience activities of parishes in bush fire prone communities of the Perth Hills. Secondly, to evaluate how the parish clergy engage in local-level interactions and acquire local knowledge as part of their role.

A review of literature on community resilience identified Ross et al. (2010) framework for evaluating communities based on local level activities as a suitable tool for this research. This framework correlates with the findings from the literature on the role of churches in disaster resilience. These findings suggest that in times of disaster, communities are looking for local people, local knowledge and local resources for assistance. However, there is little literature on the concept of churches having a role in building community resilience to general threats. Northcott (2000), coined the term “parochial ecology” to describe the local-level interactions that the parish churches engage in and placed the church in the social-ecological system of the community.

As a wife of an Anglican Priest who is Rector of a parish in the Perth Hills, I am an insider researcher. Case studies with semi-structured interviews provided the best method of collecting the stories of church-community interactions.

The research found that local parish churches with a sense of being part of the community, and not separate to the community, are engaging in activities that build resilient communities; however, there is no name for that in the vocabulary of parish clergy.
Recommendations from this research include the need for recognition of the circumstances surrounding a parish in a bush fire prone community and on the usefulness of adopting a term like parochial ecology to help explore the deep connections that parish churches could have in their communities.

This research suggests further areas of research in the importance of local groups to building resilient communities.
Acknowledgements

There are several people I would like to acknowledge and thank for their assistance.

My supervisor Nicole Hodgson, for introducing me to the concepts of social-ecological systems and community resilience, and for being an enthusiastic and encouraging supervisor. Completing this research has been a fantastic adventure. Thank you, Nicole.

Thank you to my interviewees, for agreeing to be interviewed. I am very grateful and appreciative of your kindness and time.

Stephanie Ward for proof-reading and picking up the missing element.

The Reverend Dr. Gregory Seach for checking for any theological blunders by an amateur.

Finally, my husband, John; not only did your career provide me with such an exciting research topic, but you have also been unfailingly supportive and understanding. Thank you.
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF FIGURES</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 – COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 - COMMUNITY AND CHURCHES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISASTER RESILIENCE AND CHURCHES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSIDER RESEARCHER</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMPLE</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEDURE</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data processing</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE – CONTEXT</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DARLING SCARP AND PLATEAU</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSH FIRE VULNERABILITY</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGLICAN PARISHES</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVERNANCE OF PARISHES</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER SIX – CASE STUDY OF KALAMUNDA</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOGRAPHY</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORY</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE FUTURE</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSHFIRES</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGLICAN CHURCH - ST BARNABAS</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CASE STUDY OF MUNDARING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CASE STUDY OF TOODYAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAROCHIAL ECOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER SEVEN – CASE STUDY OF MUNDARING</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOGRAPHY</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHICS</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSHFIRES</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKERVILLE FIRE</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGLICAN CHURCH – THE CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND PAROCHIAL ECOLOGY (INTERVIEW)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER NINE – CASE STUDY OF TOODYAY</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOGRAPHY</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORY</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE FUTURE</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSHFIRES</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGLICAN CHURCH – ST STEPHEN’S</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND PAROCHIAL ECOLOGY (INTERVIEW)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TEN - DISCUSSION</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY FINDINGS</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE DIRECTIONS</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Figures

FIGURE 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LONG-TERM INVESTIGATIONS OF SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS (SES). FROM REDMAN, GROVE AND KUBY (2019) ........................................................................................................................................5
FIGURE 2 THE CITY OF KALAMUNDA (.ID N.D.) ....................................................................................................................................................... 31
FIGURE 3 POPPY PROJECT NOVEMBER 2018. PHOTO BY JULIE WARD......................................................................................................................... 35
FIGURE 4 SHIRE OF MUNDRARING WITH MUNDRARING TOWN CIRCLED (.ID N.D.) ........................................................................................................ 41
FIGURE 5 TOODYAY (.ID 2019) .............................................................................................................................................................................. 51

Table of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFES</td>
<td>Department of Fire and Emergency Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHHS</td>
<td>Mundaring and Hills Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSL</td>
<td>Returned Services League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMC</td>
<td>State Emergency Management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Social-ecological systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SROWA</td>
<td>State Records Office of Western Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 - Introduction

In November 2018, in the lead up to the Centenary of the 1918 Armistice, my parish church, St Barnabas Anglican Church in Kalamunda, mounted an art installation in the Memorial Rose Garden of the church. The 16 tall wire poppies sat amongst the flowering roses with a backdrop of hundreds of knitted, crocheted and felt poppies on the front brick wall of the building. The visual impact was impressive, but the greater impact was from the people passing by or viewing the videos and photos on social media. The most profound comments were from locals expressing delight and gratitude for the efforts of the parish in creating a remembrance that was fitting to the community, and for the Memorial Rose Garden itself. This focus on the Rose Garden as a significant community site was unexpected, and highlighted, to me, the unknown impact or contribution churches can have in a community.

Drive through any rural town in south-west Australia, and you will probably see two or three little wooden or stone churches on the main thoroughfare. Many of these churches are Anglican. Sometimes these churches appear to be built on the edges of large paddocks surrounded by emptiness, indicating a gathering point for the scattered rural community; others are near other buildings of community significance, like the Council Chambers or the RSL club. These little churches often have well-tended rose gardens or graveyards or neat gravel driveways and are the visible sign of a parish. However, these churches also have deep ties to the community that might not be so immediately visible.

Strong (2014), outlines the arrival of Church of England (Anglican) clergy to the Swan River settlement from 1830 and their movement to where people were settling – Perth, Fremantle, present-day Busselton, Albany, the Swan Valley and parts of the Darling Plateau. The first church was built in Perth in 1830, and others swiftly followed. These buildings reflect the imperative to build worship centres for the British settlers as they moved through the south-west and Strong (2014, 105), points out that it was the settlers, not the clergy, that were building the churches (sometimes with no resident priest). As there was no local Anglican bishop until 1858 or a Constitution for the Perth Anglican Diocese until 1872 (Diocese of Perth
n.d.), and therefore little structure and codified governance, it suggests a priority amongst local communities to have a church building in their area.

Church buildings themselves (and rose gardens) are often of significance to the community, as seen by the distress at the potential sale of churches in Tasmania to raise funds for the compensation for victims of child sexual abuse (Shine 2018). Given the decline in the number of people professing a Christian religion in census data (ABS 2017), the sense of shock that the Anglican Church in Tasmania could inflict this blow on local communities (ABC News 2018), suggest that the buildings, at least, are of importance to the local community.

Over the past 28 years, my husband has been the Priest-in-Charge, or Rector, of several Anglican parishes in the Perth Diocese, and experience shows that parishes vary according to the built and natural environment of the parish. A parish in Perth's sprawling northern suburbs is shaped by the freeway and the coastline. Residents in these suburbs readily drive through two or three similar suburbs to find a church or sporting club to suit. In contrast, a suburb in the Perth Hills is a more discrete entity with the neighbouring suburb being quite different and often separated by bush. Not many parishes in the Perth Hills have another parish 'just down the road.'

Ecclesiology is the study of beliefs of the Christian church, including the practices, that is, how the doctrines of the church are practised (Crier 2014). This concept goes some way to explain why parishes exist and what their role is, but there is a deficit in the literature about the interface with the local community. Parochial ecology is a term coined by Michael Northcott referring to the parish system of England, inclusive of both the local government area and pastoral area of the Church of England, and refers to the local-level interactions of life (Northcott 2011). Parochial ecology is not a widely used term. However, there is some recognition of the idea of local level ecology and religion (Taylor 2007; O'Brien 2008). There is also a lack of literature describing how parishes interact with the communities of their location. The inherited historic nature of the parish system in
Australia is often acknowledged, but the actual parish-community interface is not explored (Billings n.d.). Community engagement and community development are two terms sometimes used by churches as a reason for a parish-community relationship. However, the religious usage of community engagement and community development is without a standard definition or standard ecclesiological basis (Milson 1973). A snapshot of information from some Anglican Diocesan websites shows community engagement is found mostly in social responsibility and social welfare areas of mission (McCracken 2012; ‘Church In Society’ n.d.; Webster 2013).

The parishes in the Perth Hills are embedded in the local community and are in bush fire prone areas. Most areas in the Hills have a history of bush fire with varying degrees of impact. Some, like the Toodyay fires of December 2009 (Murphy n.d.), the Roleystone fires of 2011 (Keelty 2011) and Parkerville/Stoneville fires of 2014 (Smith n.d.), were devastating to the local community, and the churches may have been expected to provide particular resources as determined by the people of the local community. The members of these churches live in that bush fire prone community too and could be victims of fire as residents, respondents as volunteer bushfire brigade members, and providers of support and knowledge after the event. An understanding of local-level interactions between people, organisations and institutions that make up the community could provide a way of understanding the expectations and preparing for both specific and general threats.

This research aims to identify a role local churches play in building community resilience in local communities. It aims to address the thesis that in order to provide food and blankets in disasters, churches establish many and deep links across the community, and that these links help cultivate the essential social and cultural resources necessary to respond to unknown disruptive and emergent threats to the local community.

Community resilience is "the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterised by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise" (Magis 2010).
Emerging from a systems approach were the seminal works on resilience, which, over time, have fostered the evolving definitions and applications of community resilience. This evolution includes the particular features found in local communities that demonstrate the capacity to mitigate, react to and recover from, specific threats like a bushfire, as well as the general threats of global environmental, economic and social change.

Based on my experience and observations as an insider researcher, the assumption is that local Anglican parishes do engage in community resilience-building activities for both specific and general threats, but are not recognising it as such. Qualitative research using case studies with information collected by semi-structured interviews can provide information about how these churches and their leaders see the relationship between them and their communities. The objective of the research is to hear the stories clergy tell about the way their parish interacts with the local community and to identify common themes around a framework of social resilience.

Chapter two is a literature review of the concept of the resilience of communities. The role of churches in a community is examined in chapter three. The methodology and explanation of an insider researcher is chapter four, while chapter five is the background to the case studies. Chapters six, seven and eight are the case studies of Kalamunda, Mundaring and Toodyay, respectively. Chapter nine contains the findings and recommendations.
Chapter 2 – Community resilience

This chapter reviews the literature on the following concepts: community resilience and evaluating community resilience.

Community resilience

A social-ecological system links people together with their environment as a common thread, and through their collective actions (Folke 2006). Berkes and Folke (1998) linked the social sphere with the environment in the terms “social-ecological system” and “social-ecological linkages”, a concept of interconnected, interrelated networks of people and environment.

Social-ecological systems (SES) are complex, adaptive, have thresholds and emergent properties and are cyclical (Walker, Salt, and Reid 2006). Social-ecological systems also can be vulnerable, lose adaptive capacity and to be unable to deal with disruptive variables and events (Folke 2006). As a system, the social-ecological networks are influenced by other systems of different scales, both above and below; by the inputs and outputs; by the feedback loops; and temporal and spatial scales. Local communities are made up of a network of interconnected different social-ecological systems which feed into the community a range of knowledge, skills and interests. Local parish churches are part of this
system. The greater the diversity and the more interconnections create a tighter feedback mechanism for the community to respond to different events (Hopkins 2008).

In determining the resilience of a social-ecological system, there are two questions to be answered. The resilience of what and resilience to what? (Carpenter et al. 2001). There are different definitions and applications of the term “resilience”. Engineering and ecological resilience (Holling 2009) are common in community resilience literature. Engineering resilience is the idea of returning to a stable position, shape or dynamic after disruption (Folke 2006): for example, bushfire through agricultural land destroys the crop but the land is reusable for the following growing season and the next crop is successful. The second, ecological resilience, is defined as “a measure of robustness and buffering capacity of the system to changing conditions” (Berkes and Folke 1998, 12). So while returning to the original position, shape or dynamic might not be possible, the original function is maintained within the changed circumstances (Folke 2006); for example, changing climate results in a particular crop no longer being reliable as a source of income, but changing the crop to one that suits the changed climatic conditions ensures continued economic use of the land. A third application of the term, social-ecological resilience, links adaptive capacity with the concept of transformation and innovation as a response to disruption (Folke 2006). This response is not to regain the original relationship between the environmental resource and the social use of that resource, but to create new relationships. For example, land becomes unproductive due to changing climate or economic downturn and a decision is made to allow the bush to subsume it, and the result is a reestablishment of biomes and ecosystems that not only regenerate the land but also adds amenity to the area.

The concept of transformational adaptive resilience emerged from sustainability literature exploring the ideas of complex adaptive systems and ecological resilience (Berkes and Folke 1998) and drew heavily on the disruptive impact of human activity on the complex natural systems.
The definition of resilience as “the capacity of the system to absorb disturbance and reorganise,” (Walker et al. 2004), is commonly used in understanding of social-ecological systems (Folke et al. 2010; 2005), while also subdividing the term into two distinct types – specific and general resilience (Folke et al. 2010; Olsson, Folke, and Berkes 2004). Specific resilience is directly related to both an identified context and a threat, while general resilience is to threats that are as yet unknown or unspecified, but still viewed within a specific context (Walker et al. 2009).

Engineering resilience is also known as disaster resilience or coping capacity (Birkmann 2006) and is linked to perceived vulnerability to a disaster or shock event (Berman, Quinn, and Paavola 2012). Across several disciplines, this understanding of resilience is common (Berkes and Ross 2013), and is often more local community focussed (Magis 2010). Identifying vulnerability to facilitate planning, responding, and recovery to specific threats dominates the literature within this understanding of resilience. Often a dichotomy exists between coping and adapting. Coping with vulnerability is seen as structure-dominant with hierarchical management systems, as opposed to an adaptive capacity ability to work within a series of interconnecting systems and multi-layered interactions across different spheres to absorb, manage or transform, in response to a threat (Berman, Quinn, and Paavola 2012).

There is a growing body of work that suggests that there is more common ground between ecological, adaptive and engineering resilience than has often been believed. Concepts like community resilience and adaptive capacity have become more broadly defined and involves the people of the community, their abilities, their networks, the community physical and economic assets, and values as well as culture, learning, networks, collaborations and self-organisation (Berkes and Ross 2013; Reid 2012; Magis 2010; Sharifi 2016). With this is an emerging interest in local community level resilience building (Berkes and Ross 2013), and the importance of other factors including diversity, memory, knowledge as well as self-organisation and awareness of change emerged (Berkes and Seixas 2005). With a focus on the social aspects of the SES, identification and assessment of
what makes one community survive in the face of environmental, economic or social challenges while another community faced with similar issues fails, is possible (Bec, Moyle, and Moyle 2018). If there are particular elements of a community that fosters adaptive capacity, and these elements can be identified, then maybe different communities can be evaluated against those elements. In addition, cultivation and nurturing of these elements that foster adaptive capacity can be instituted to improve the outcomes for the community.

**Evaluating community resilience**

There have been different approaches to identifying and assessing the social aspects of community resilience. Magis (2010) examined what personal and group factors contribute to a thriving community and determined that there were eight identifiable characteristics that could be observed or measured: community resources, resource development, resource engagement, active agent, collective action, strategic action, equity and impact. These eight can be categorised into three different groups – the management, use and future of resources; individual and group agency; and over time, the changes to the measurable and observable community resilience characteristics, like number of people collaborating.

Ross et. al., (2010) defined social resilience as “how individuals, communities and societies adapt, transform, and potentially become stronger when faced with environmental, social, economic or political challenges”, and highlighted the necessity of adaptive and transformational capacity at all levels or scales of human interactions to create resilient communities – personal, local and beyond. There are six social resilience indicators used by Ross et al., (2010): people-place connections; knowledge, skills and learning; community networks; engaged governance; diverse and innovative economies; and community infrastructure.

Thornley et al., (2015) looked at the individual, community and societal scales in assessing the factors that affected community resilience in their study of the Canterbury (Christchurch) earthquakes in 2010. Individual factors related to the groups people belonged to and the capacity of those groups to help individual
well-being during the ongoing tremors; community factors of connectedness, infrastructure, participation and decision-making require a foundation of previously established relationships or opportunities; and societal factors relate primarily to the work of outside agencies and how these outsiders worked with the locals and respected local knowledge and decision-making capabilities (Thornley et al. 2015).

Likewise, Bec, Moyle, and Moyle (2018) focussed on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of community members and groups to evaluate the resilience of the community. They found that both individual and group capacity to adapt and manage change was advantageous to the community’s ability to adapt and manage change (Bec, Moyle, and Moyle 2018).

Each of these different approaches focus on relationships and interactions between the different elements of a community and with other communities. Some are interrelated; for example, an individual has little opportunity to engage in community decision-making opportunities if those opportunities do not exist or are poorly communicated. However, there are common themes. The place is essential for the environmental, social, economic and political resources it offers (Magis 2010) as are the interactions between the people of that place and the resources it offers (Ross et al. 2010). Community resilience and individual wellbeing are linked, as is the impact of the broader society to both the individual and the community. Thornley et al., (2015) concluded that any community could cope with a disaster if the right conditions and ways of interacting within and without the community are pre-existing, while Magis (2010) outlined the importance of identifying the resilience level of a community to future planning.

The framework from Ross et al., (2010) argues for the use of indicators of social resilience in the exchange of information and decision-making at local, regional and global levels. Anglican parishes are local, but they are not isolated entities. Anglican parishes make up the Diocese, the Anglican church of Australia, and the worldwide communion of the Anglican church. Decisions made at these regional and global levels influence parish operations, for example, authorised forms of worship services. Additionally, secular decisions impact on parishes, like
planning decisions. Ross et al., framework is the best fit for exploring the interactions occurring on different levels and with different systems.
Chapter 3 - Community and churches

This chapter explores the literature on disaster resilience and churches, and church in the local community.

This research is using mostly Christian faith communities as the area of interest, but the concepts can be applied to any faith community that is located in a geographical community and has an understanding of their role as being part of, not separate from, that local community.

Disaster resilience and churches

The 2011 Christchurch earthquake severely damaged the Anglican Cathedral of Christchurch and the innovative construction of a cardboard cathedral to serve the city after this loss, speaks of the role the building served (Barrie 2013). The cardboard cathedral not only provided worship space and an administrative centre for the church but also space for remembering the lives lost during the earthquake. Churches can be places that people seek out in times of threat or disaster for "food and blankets", but there is also a recognition that churches provide intangible support to communities. This support might be as a safe place, emotional support and an opportunity to do something tangible in response to the disaster, maybe sit and remember someone lost or injured, volunteer to help or serve tea and coffee. The following four areas of research on the role of churches in disaster-hit communities, investigate different events in different locations but have drawn similar conclusions. The four areas are: social capital role of churches, the welfare role of churches, expectations of churches by the community, and being part of the community in the times of need.

Rivera (2018) highlights the gap between the expectations of affected communities that churches will provide "tangible" assistance (food and blankets) and the demonstrated ability of the churches to meet that expectation, and the marginalisation of churches in the disaster mitigation and recovery planning of government authorities for vulnerable communities. Rivera's primary focus is on the social capital capacity of churches. Most involvement in faith-based organisations is voluntary and is based on trust, reciprocity and some level of civic
engagement (Strømsnes 2008), and trust and reciprocity are two important factors in developing social capital (Putnam and Goss 2002). Strongly linked to the churches' capacity to build social capital, is the importance of local groups, leaders and networks in the ability of the community to respond and adapt to a disruptive event (Thornley et al. 2015).

Likewise, Webber and Jones (2011), report on the role of Catholic agencies in providing welfare support in the wake of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. Again, the theme is that the capacity of churches is being underutilised. Many large churches, like the Anglican and Catholic denominations, have a welfare arm operating in the broader community. These are often separate from parish churches, although parishes might help support such organisations. Webber and Jones (2011), looked at the local community level and the global level work of the Catholic agencies in community recovery in the bushfire affected communities, and found that while the Catholic agencies could provide aid and coordinate the distribution of aid from other non-government and government sources, the local level knowledge, relationships and physical resources like buildings and catering facilities, were what the local community wanted and found most useful.

A matter mentioned by many participants was the importance of seeking out the community leaders and existing service providers and discovering what the community needed, rather than entering with a pre-conceived idea of how services should look, (Webber and Jones 2011, 269).

Some of these needs were food, blankets, clothing; others were access to church schools, church buildings and facilities to be used as places for gathering, interacting and providing the ever sustaining cup of tea. Community members expressed expectations that churches could provide physical needs like an impromptu community coffee shop as well as people to serve, listen and to be a recognisable face when there are so many ‘outsiders’ (Webber and Jones 2011).
Similarly, following the Christchurch earthquake, Brogt et al. (2015), found three common themes that emerged from a study of the clergy of the earthquake area. Theme 1: the responsibility of the church in the community – it is a common understanding amongst parish-based clergy that their social and pastoral responsibility is for all people within their parish borders, not just the members of their congregations. Theme 2: reach of the church - churches have considerable reach within the community through the congregation members themselves and their social networks, as well as the perceived ability of clergy to access areas that lay people cannot, for example, in hospitals. The clergy were also seen as people who could advocate for the socially disadvantaged, mainly if the church or clergy had community connections in disadvantaged areas. Theme 3: activism and advocacy in the church - churches provided community members willing to provide hands-on practical activity, and the church buildings and resources, like halls and kitchens, were also valuable assets to the local community and used as distribution points, collection points and gathering points (Brogt, Grimshaw, and Baird 2015). These three themes are also highlighting the identification of the local church as an important resource for the local community in times of disaster, not just for the "food and blankets" but also because of the involvement in the community before the disaster event.

A final study is evocatively titled ‘Gumboot Religion’: Religious Responses to an Australian Natural Disaster, and is a reflection on the way religious leaders and groups responded to the Queensland Floods of 2011 (Ghiloni and Shaw 2013). Many religious people of many faiths, literally pulled on gumboots and helped with the clean-up in the aftermath of the flooding as a pastoral response to the disaster. Again, the previously established local networks of the different faith communities were an important way of receiving and sending information about need and activating teams of helpers. Physical resources were utilised as resource centres and safe places for face to face contact and exchanges (Ghiloni and Shaw 2013, 35).

The three common elements of these studies are: one, the value of local-level knowledge and expertise found in the parishioners of church who are also
residents of the affected community; two, the physical and social resources churches have either in the community, or can tap into at a higher level up from the parish church, i.e. faith-based schools or campsites; and three, the networks, trust and recognition of the church, its leaders and members of the congregation, are established prior to the event and suggests a level of engagement in community by the church.

The earthquake in Christchurch and the recovery and rebuilding is in response to a specific event in a vulnerable community (Thornley et al. 2015), and such responses are indicative of that as the experience. Local knowledge, experience and networks are important in the way the community manages the impact of the event on its residents. While the government and not for profit welfare sectors can provide infrastructure and resources, it is the local organisations that represent the identity of the community (Thornley et al. 2015, 29)

However, there is, in both the story of the cardboard cathedral and the common elements of the above studies, an assumption that the churches would be capable of responding appropriately to community need. In other words, there was an unexpressed recognition of the types of roles churches play in building community resilience in their local community. These roles include developing and using networks of people linked to the congregation spreading out into the local community and intersecting with networks on both horizontal and vertical levels of scale, through friendship or group affiliation networks as well as networks of regional or national bodies; having people and physical resources to draw on, for example, a place with a kitchen and equipment to serve large numbers of people, and enough volunteers to meet that need; and thirdly, churches provide the mystical element of prayer, contemplation and symbols that the community members recognise as providing a degree of comfort and expression of loss experienced in the community, almost expressing the spirit of the community. Identifying and evaluating the community resilience building roles that local parishes participate in, and their capacity to respond to a bush fire disaster with people, buildings and networks, is the purpose of this study.
Church in the local community

A local community has many descriptors and a multitude of boundary markers. These could be geographical, political, administrative, social, interest-based, resource-based or unintentionally created by the built environment (Sharifi 2016). However, O'Brien (2008), argues that scale is an important factor in understanding changes in nested hierarchies and should be carefully attended to. It could possibly be said that local has a scale as well. Local as in my suburb, local as in my local government area or local as in the Heritage Trail down the road.

Within geographical or place communities, there are also communities of practice (Pelling and High 2005), and the vertical and horizontal networks and interconnections between these communities are not always explicitly identified but exist in a more obscure manner. Communities of practice are founded on shared activities and engagement with other people rather than location (Wenger and Snyder 2000), though there can be intersecting points between communities of place and communities of practice (Pelling and High 2005). A local parish church is both a community of place, by its location within a geographical community, and a community of practice. However, if the church model is as a gathering point for the worshipping community, as opposed to serving the needs of the people who live around the building, then the community that meets there is more of a ‘practice’ type than a ‘place’ type (Brogt, Grimshaw, and Baird 2015).

Local churches may be local communities of practice, but they are also affected by the hierarchical structure of the denomination, as well as the decision-making within the political boundaries of the community. As community groups, at the local level, churches, are part of the networks that make up the social-ecological system of that place. The idea of geographical place is linked to the building of churches in communities. Historically the building of a church had many different meanings: in colonised countries it symbolised a connection to the home country (Pickard 2009); in England the Church of England buildings were a sign of God’s presence in that community (Davison and Milbank 2010); and in
many places, a symbol of communal polity and praxis in decision-making (Northcott 2011).

“However, there are important ways in which the parish church might recover a role in parochial ecology by promoting through its worship and teaching and community actions local ecological practices which contribute to the quest for a more sustainable society”. (Northcott 2000).

In the above quote, Northcott could be using the word “parochial” in three different ways; the first, is parochial to do with one’s local area, the second as in the English system of parishes as units of the local government system, and the third is parochial as in the parish church geographical location (Cambridge University Press 2019). All three relate to a specific geographical location, and one specifically to the local church. For Northcott (2011, 71), local is where interactions between people, and between people and the natural environment, occur in a specific place. Parochial ecology is the engagement with the local environmental, social, economic and political activities that occurs at a level characterised by face-to-face encounters, that is, at the local shop, park, school and church. The fact that these encounters can occur easily and without planning, demonstrate what “local” is in practice (Northcott 2000).

Since Northcott is focussed on society at a geographically localised level, and he is linking people, place and environment through the use of the term “ecology”, then it is reasonable to associate his term, parochial ecology, in both the local community and the parish church iterations, with community resilience. Northcott, (2000, 84) suggests that an understanding of parochial ecology, both of the local environment and of the role of the parish church, should be part of the way the church operates. For example, care for the local bush, engagement in local festivals, shared experiences of hospitality, creativity and the rhythm of life in that community. Local connections, Northcott (2000) suggests, are built around the face-to-face interactions at local level, and of the involvement in the parochial ecology, the life, of that place.
Chapter 4 - Methodology

Research questions

The first research question is whether Anglican parish priests in bush fire prone areas are articulating stories of adaption, transformation and general resilience when they describe the role of their church in a community that faces a specific threat.

The results of a survey conducted with a range of Christian clergy from different denominations after the Christchurch earthquake, identified three themes of church response: responsibility, reach and activism (Brogt, Grimshaw, and Baird 2015). Each of these themes suggest the pre-existence of adaption, transformation and general resilience components of social-ecological resilience (Folke 2006; Walker et al. 2004) within those community-based churches. Survey respondents spoke of intentional engagement with the needs of the local community, a willingness to interact with community members of all levels, the availability of their property plant as a community resource, and as a centre of knowledge for the time of community need (Brogt, Grimshaw, and Baird 2015).

A significant tenet of parochial ecology is the local-level interactions and understanding of the rhythm of life of that community. There is an expectation that parish priests in the Diocese of Perth remain in a parish for at least five years. In Perth Hills parishes, the proximity to bush, the threat of bush fire, the village type lifestyle and the interconnectedness of the people, takes time to understand and therefore, a parish priest who is only expected to be in place for a relatively short time might need to be more proactive about developing this understanding. An appreciation of the parochial ecology enables access to community networks and authority structures, like the local government authority.

The second research question is whether the parish priest describes local-level interactions and local knowledge when talking about the activities of their parish.
Aligned with stories of general resilience is the attributes of social resilience found within communities (Ross et al. 2010). These attributes encompass a wide range of indicators and criteria. Some, like “people-place connections”, are readily applicable to a local church, as in, the level of engagement with the community by the church, while others like “engaged governance” are reliant on both the community and the church being active participants (Ross et al. 2010, 108).

The research design

The emphasis on what the church leaders say and describe in their stories of the church-community interactions indicates an underlying interpretivist approach to the knowledge sought and how it will be used (Saunders and Tosey 2013). Interpretivism assumes that people’s understanding of their interactions vary (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2015), and are dependent on their interpretation of the event, phenomena or experience, and that the stories they tell provide new understandings on how and why different people and groups give meaning to those interactions (Saunders and Tosey 2013).

The research questions are open-ended enquiry-type questions designed to seek out rich information from the participants. It was assumed that the information gathered would be contextual and be told through a lens of constructed understanding of social interactions. Therefore the information was obtained using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research investigates and collects a broad range of non-numerical data in order to understand different interpretations of phenomena, often directed on the interactions between people, events, and different contexts (Given 2008). The research questions were looking for rich data, and the use of qualitative research is best answered using the case study method.

A case study is “an empirical method that investigations a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin 2017). The reason for a case study approach is not to amass a large amount of information, but to discover and investigate the experience or phenomenon in a specific context (Hammersley and Gomm 2019), and to find answers to 'how' and 'why' questions.
through a variety of evidence (Yin 2017). The case study method will provide an opportunity to uncover same, similar and different views and responses to the same phenomena, and through those views and responses, uncover different, similar or novel expressions of social resilience (Yin 2017).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit answers to 'how' and 'why' questions. Semi-structured interviews use some prepared open-ended questions designed to gain descriptive information from the participants that can then generate more questions from the interviewer to gain new information, particularly when with complex issues (Given 2008; Wilson 2014; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2015). However, semi-structured interviews have low reliability due to interviewer bias. Reliability would refer to the likelihood of another researcher obtaining the same data if they repeated the research (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2015).

Insider researcher

Kanuha (2000) defines insider research as “research in which scholars conduct studies with populations and communities and identity groups of which they are also members," and Sherry (2008) identifies an insider researcher with the existence of "a situation where the researcher is a part of the topic being investigated." Likewise, DeLyser (2001), describes being a staff member and a community member of the subject of her research. My research involves exploring the ways that local Anglican parishes in the bush fire prone areas of the Perth Hills are contributing to community resilience to both specific and general threats. As I am a member of the Anglican parish of Kalamunda and a member of the Anglican Diocese of Perth, I am therefore an insider researcher. However, I am not only a member of the parish community; I am the wife of an ordained Anglican priest who works in the Diocese of Perth. As Taylor (2011) points out, just as I am familiar with the workings of the community, the community are likely to be familiar with me, or my husband.

Conducting insider research requires the researcher to balance the need for objectivity with familiarity; both of the community by the researcher and of the
researcher by the community (DeLyser 2001). While familiarity with some of the members of the community is expected and some awareness of how the community might function, this can also lead to issues such as over-familiarity, higher expectations placed on the researcher by the members of the community regarding protecting the culture of the community, and the potential for awkwardness in any ongoing relationship (Sherry 2008). For this research, it was vital for me to be aware of the boundaries between what I know from my experience and what other members of the community know from their experience. The need to balance objectivity with familiarity is also one reason for only interviewing clergy from parishes that I am not involved with, and not interviewing my husband.

DeLyser (2001) speaks of the expectations of the community for her to already know the answers to her questions and the question of the “assumed shared knowledge” of groups (p.444). The need to be reflective about the engagement in shared experiences is highlighted by Sherry (2008). Since my research is about the ways parish clergy talk about the role of their church in the community and the resources their church offer the community, it will be assumed by the interviewee that I have some shared knowledge. However, I am focussed on whether these stories contain activities that are indicators of social resilience beneficial to the community (Ross et al., 2010). Our shared knowledge made it easier for me to understand the story and its context, but I was looking for common themes reflective of community or social resilience from my case studies.

Using my home parish of Kalamunda as a baseline case study meant that I had already identified several church activities and functions that fit the indicators of social resilience, based on my experience and observations. I made this identification before I commenced this research as I became familiar with the concept of community resilience. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2013) identify four ways that feminist insider researchers have managed their personal experiences. First by minimising the personal experience to reduce its impact on the research; secondly, by utilising their experiences strategically to access particular groups but still maintain a degree of objectivity; thirdly, by maximising the personal
experience by making it central to the research; and finally by incorporating it through using the researcher as a participant. In this instance, utilising my experience as a clergy partner through several parish contexts and over many years provides enough knowledge, context and familiarity with the functions and activities of parish churches to develop Kalamunda, my current parish, as the baseline case, without the need to interview my husband.

The use of my experience and observation to establish a baseline case increases the perception of bias; however, the use of archival documents, such as Annual Meeting reports, media reports, and external sources like historical societies or local government sources, to provide evidence will ameliorate that perception. Transparency and self-reflection about the choices of information I used are appropriate measures to take in qualitative research (Galdas 2017).

Sample

Kalamunda is a typical Hills village with marri forests, laterite gravel soils and a lifestyle different to the urban sprawl suburbs of Perth. There is also an entwined history of the community and the Anglican Church in the area. The distinct features of Kalamunda may exist in other Perth Hills areas, and many of these suburbs also have local Anglican parishes suitable for a sample.

There are six Anglican parishes on the Darling escarpment or in the Hills – Roleystone, Lesmurdie, Kalamunda, Mundaring, Darlington and Toodyay – and all face the same specific threat. Two parishes, Darlington and Lesmurdie, are slightly different. Both have small buildings and little by way of agency in determining response to a bushfire. Darlington, colloquially referred to as a hamlet, is a small part of the Shire of Mundaring, while Lesmurdie, is part of the City of Kalamunda and is the neighbouring suburb of Kalamunda. Roleystone is part of the City Armadale, but the suburb itself experienced a severe bushfire in 2011 (Keelty 2011). Toodyay and Mundaring are like Kalamunda; they are regional centres and will be a good comparison with my experiences and observations of Kalamunda.
The sample of these two is a deliberate choice to replicate some of the critical features of Kalamunda parish. These features include size, buildings, history, location, vulnerability to bush fire threat and the community size and importance. The sampling method is purposive or theoretical (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2015). This method is standard in interpretivist and inductive research, where the participants’ knowledge, experience or context is essential for the outcome of the research (Emmel 2019). Since the objective is to collect in-depth and context-specific data, purposively chosen small sample sizes are of more use than larger, more randomised samples (Mathison 2019). Time and availability of both myself and the potential interviewees is also a consideration in the sample size.

The parish priest, Rector or Priest-in-Charge, as the church leader, of each of the sample parishes, was interviewed. The leadership provided by these people determines the type and extent of formal community engagement. Additionally, they have a reasonable overall knowledge of the parish and the stories of the parish and community. Likewise, if there were to be contact or arrangements made between a particular community or local government authorities, it would be the parish priests who would be a pivotal person in that relationship.

Procedure

Initial email contact with the interviewees occurred after ethics approval was obtained from Murdoch University's Human Research Ethics Committee. Information letters and consent forms were sent. Follow-up emails and phone calls with the parish priest of the sample parishes established the date, time and location. The suggested venue was the church, parish office or Rectory (house). Consent for audio recording was obtained in writing and verbally at the start of the recording.

Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were semi-structured and took one hour to complete. The questions were open-ended and structured, and the first questions were about the story of the parish, followed by questions about how the parish understands the
concept of community engagement. The purpose of the questions is to get the participant talking about different types church-community interactions, and Ross et al. (2010, 108) indicators of social resilience and monitoring framework were an excellent tool for eliciting information. The questions were based on the following:

*People-place connections* – stewardship has a particular meaning in theology and is usually applied to the care for God’s creation and wise use of resources. “How does the parish understand its role for the stewardship of the local environment?”

*Knowledge, skills and learning* – “Is the church providing any types of resources for facilitating learning or knowledge transfer? What type of resources?”

*Community networks* – “What is your assessment of the community networks and connections? Is it neighbours with neighbours, or intergenerational, or based on shared history?”

*Engaged governance* – “How does the church fit into the wider picture of the decision-making processes in the community?”

*Diverse and innovative economy* – “What activities does the church do that feeds into the local economy?” Markets, Op shop, other?

*Community infrastructure* - “What services or resources does the church offer to the community?”

Other categories for questions are disaster resilience and general resilience

*Disaster resilience* – “What bush fire threats have the community faced over its recent and more distant history? How did the church respond at that time?”

*General resilience* – for hearing about the stories of how the church is building adaptive resilience itself – “How is the church responding to the decline in church attendance? How is it working to help its newer members feel like they belong” What strategies do find work in engaging younger people in leadership roles?”
The purpose of these questions was to cover the themes required for the research but still allow scope for a conversational flow or information from the participant (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2015). The answers from the interviewees prompted follow-up questions. The recording of the interview was transcribed.

Data processing

The transcripts of the two semi-structured interviews were coded and analysed. Coding is the process of giving meaning to different parts of the interview and then grouping the same codes for analysis (Olsen 2019). In this research, the themes were already identified, so the coding was for matching the words of a story to the appropriate theme, for example, people-place connections (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2015).

Additional contextual information came from local government websites and government agencies such as DFES. Archival material found on historical society websites and Trove provided the stories that people tell about their community. The information will be used to give a background picture of the community and its environment.
Chapter five – Context

The Darling Scarp and Plateau

Perth is a city shaped by two distinct landforms – the Swan Coastal Plain and the Darling Scarp and Plateau. Geologically, the Swan Coastal Plain is younger than the Darling Plateau and has soft, sedimentary soils and undulating dunes, while the Darling Scarp and plateau, in contrast, has ancient harder metamorphic rocks, lateritic soils, cliffs, valleys and hills. Fault line activity and erosion resulted in the distinctive sharp, rocky rise of the Darling Scarp (Gozzard 2007). Rising to 300 metres above sea level, the western edge of the Scarp bears many scars from quarrying activities and is heavily wooded in parts with marri and jarrah (King and Wells 1990). The Darling Scarp runs north-south approximately 1000 kilometres from near Shark Bay in the midwest to deep into the south-west corner of Western Australia (Gozzard 2007, 6.) Colloquially referred to as the "Hills" or the "Perth Hills, the Darling Scarp is a feature of Perth.

The north-south axis of the Swan Coastal Plain has medium to high-density adjacent suburbs stretching from Yanchep to Mandurah, in contrast to the low to medium density peri-urban localities on the Scarp and plateau. The Hills lifestyle is a selling point for real estate and usually refers to the sense of amenity facilitated by the smaller towns or villages, natural bushland, views and proximity to Perth (Farrelly 2018).

Large parts of the Perth Hills are state or national parks, as well as water catchment areas, and further east behind the escarpment, are more significant semi-rural and rural properties

Bush fire vulnerability

In 1935 the Roads Board Association initiated two conferences on the bushfire management in the Perth Hills. One of the main points of discussion was the necessity for legislation to allow for the creation of a local bushfire authority with the right to enter private property. Observations included: that the nature of the bush environment created higher fuel loads, that productive bushfire fighting
capacity was necessary, and that the rural and bush areas had a specific need due to the higher risk of threat to life and property (*West Australian* 1935). The local Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade of Kalamunda was formed that year (‘History’ n.d.). In the past ten years there have been three devastating bushfires in three locations in the Perth Hills: Toodyay fires of December 2009 (Murphy n.d.), the Roleystone fires of 2011 (Keelty 2011) and Parkerville/Stoneville fires of 2014 (Smith n.d.).

The Keelty report after the Roleystone fire made 55 recommendations, including the designation of Fire Prone Areas be a Planning Commission responsibility, not a local government one; an increase in controlled burns in the urban/rural interface areas of Perth; and comprehensive measuring, recording and mapping fuel loads and high fire risk areas (Keelty 2011). The Perth Hills is designated bush fire prone with a high risk (DFES n.d.). A 2019 review of the current methodology for designating fire-prone areas, recommends a change for urban areas on the Swan Coastal Plain, but not for the Perth Hills, which are still identified as high risk (Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage n.d.).

**Anglican Parishes**

In the Anglican faith, the ordained leaders may be the priest, the minister, the clergy or, though rarely, as pastor; and can be addressed as Father, (or Mother?) or Reverend. Some of the differences are personal preferences of the clergy, and some reflect the parish ecclesiology. To minister is to lead the worship service, or to pastor is to care for the congregation, while the priest is the one set aside to conduct the tasks of ritual; and as clergy, are the ones set aside, ordained, from the laity, the unordained (Dulles 2013). The theological identity of the priest may then influence the style of leadership of the parish.

Newland (2013, 100) explores the role of theological education and training of clergy in preparation for parish ministry. She affirms the traditional concept that “pastoral ministry involves the cure of souls or the care of souls” and argues that learning to engage in theological thinking and reflection is essential in
understanding the great trust placed in clergy to answer the existential and philosophical questions that arise in day-to-day interactions with the community.

Different theological perspectives shape how interactions with the local community occur. There is a debate in the Anglican church about the shape of parish ministry. The traditional model is the 'inherited church' while the new model is the 'gathered community.' The traditional model centred around the parish church as a community of practice found in a community of place. The church exists for all who live there. The new model weakens, or breaks, the nexus between place and practice. The church community gather somewhere, and it could be at the church, but rather than the common factor being the shared geographical place, the common factor becomes some other shared practice or cultural background (Northcott 2011, 82). The arguments against the new model draw on the same “cure of souls” tradition as Newland. The role of the church and its leaders is to be hospitable and open to everyone in that parish, whereas the gathered community is a group of like-minded people, or with like interests, who come to a convenient meeting point devoid of local context, and therefore devoid of people-place connections (Davison and Milbank 2010).

Percy et al., (2005, 63), identify two theological traditions around engagement with the culture of the day. The first is combative: modern society is antithetical to the Christian message; and the second is relational, as in entering into dialogue and identifying shared spaces. Therefore, different theological understandings of why and how interactions with the community should happen, frame the way parish churches approach the community.

Spencer (2013, 86–88), reviewed and categorised a range of ways parish churches approach the community. The focus was on the dominant missiology, or the work of the church, in parishes. The first style, was the Salvationist model – save the world from sin; the second, the Liberationist model – to free people from oppression; the third, is the Trinitarian model – that God’s love and desire for the world becomes the purpose of the church; and the fourth, is the Prophetic dialogue model – take the saving, freeing and loving elements of the other three, and combine with the prophetic voice for social justice and peace, speak to and
with the world. In practice, Spencer suggests, it is an unequal mix of the four styles, formed by the tradition of the parish, the social environment of the community, and the theological understanding of both missiology and ecclesiology held by both the congregation and the clergy. His response to "traditional" or "gathered," is "both". Having a central meeting point, the church, has many functional and structural benefits. However, by also interacting with the community where they are, the church can learn how the community functions and what the community needs are, because it is still important for the church to be the voice for the voiceless (Spencer 2013.)

In assessing the ways of approaching community as shaped by different theological traditions, I suggest there are three common ways this occurs. The first is the mission-oriented approach – the relationship with the community is for adding new converts to the parish; the second is the community engagement approach – working with the community on local issues and for meeting community needs; and thirdly, the service model – serve the community through volunteerism and service-oriented jobs. Like Spencer found, a combination of the three is present in healthy parishes, and there is flexibility surrounding the mix. However, the approach would shape how interaction with the community occurs, determining the local knowledge, skills and learning sought, the types of networks established, and what resources the parish offers to the community.

Mission-oriented parishes value the acquisition of faith-based knowledge, skills and values by the congregation or those new to the faith. These are the traditional Sunday Schools, Youth Groups, Adult bible study, a seasonal focus for Lent in the lead up to Easter, and programs designed for individual or small group mentoring. At an extreme, groups using church facilities would need to reflect the Christian values of the parish. This thinking is why community activities like yoga classes are sometimes banned from hiring church premises (The Telegraph 2017). Upskilling parishioners on mission-oriented knowledge, like how to talk to people about Jesus, becomes vital as the primary focus of community interaction is to evangelise.
Parishes that talk about community engagement identify a need in the community that the parish can address from a position of abundance. This abundance may be in the form of physical resources, knowledge and skills of people in the church or associated with the church, or money. It may be a combination of the three. The parish engages in an audit of its resources, consults the community to ascertain need, decides on a project and implements, either by themselves or with secular institutions, for example, the local government authority or not-for-profit welfare type organisations (McCracken 2012). For example, if access to affordable fresh food as a community need, then vacant parish land could be turned into a community garden for that purpose.

The service model is similar to the engagement model, but the focus is on the individual response, not the parish response. Rather than auditing parish abundance, the emphasis is on the individual as they move around in their community. Individual response may coalesce into a group response, for example, an individual discovers their neighbour is unable to mow their lawn due to illness, and so mows their lawn. From that experience, a gardening group might form and help out needy people in the community. The acquisition of faith-based knowledge and values by the congregation is essential and facilitated through sermons, small group bible study and seasonal focus for Lent in the lead up to Easter. Parish-wide, there is a translation of Christian values of hospitality; care for the sick, the poor, the needy; and wise stewardship of resources. The parishioners are sent out to serve the community. Op shops and coffee mornings are good examples.

Each model has an element of needing to know and understand the community in order to be successful. It must be remembered, though, that a church's primary purpose is faith-based, but interacting ecologically with the local community, can serve the interests of the community and the church.

Governance of parishes

Parishes are the small units of the Diocese, and are identified by the location of the church building, Parish of Kalamunda, and with a name, St Barnabas. The churches and other buildings are owned by the legal entity of the
Diocese and the parishes have beneficial ownership, therefore all parishes are governed by various statutes and policies of the Diocese. Clergy are licensed and appointed by the Archbishop. Stipendiary clergy refer to those being paid and non-stipendiary clergy are honourary.
Chapter six – Case study of Kalamunda

Geography

The City of Kalamunda is a local government area 24 km south-east of Perth CBD with three distinct localities: Foothills, Escarpment and Eastern Rural. The focus of this report is The Escarpment and Eastern Rural Districts.

The dominant natural feature of the City of Kalamunda is the Darling Scarp, and there are approximately 20,000 residents in The Escarpment suburbs of Gooseberry Hill, Kalamunda and Lesmurdie (.id n.d.). Behind the escarpment are valleys and hills, often with sweeping vistas of orchards or vineyards; this is the low-density rural area of the City of Kalamunda.

History

Timber, quarrying and orchard growing attracted the early European settlers from 1861 (All we need is right here n.d.), and the 1901 plan of the townsite of Kalamunda shows the development on the slightly flatter land on the
top of scarp and none on the western rise (Absolon 1901). In 1963 the flat cleared land from the defunct railway line became home to the new library building and the third St Barnabas Anglican Church. Over time the Historical Village, the Zig Zag cultural centre, Telstra and St John Ambulance, completed the building on the reserve in the central business area of Kalamunda. Other parts of the reserve are Heritage Trails.

The area has always attracted visitors, and the first hotel in 1902 offered accommodation for holidaymakers and travellers. At that time, the whole area was becoming an accessible resort-type location, and numerous boarding houses also opened. After World War Two, most of these holiday accommodations closed with holiday destinations further from Perth becoming more accessible by car (inHerit-State Heritage Office n.d.).

Another group of visitors to the area were the “Weekenders”. Prominent Perth residents often owned weekend properties in Kalamunda and Gooseberry Hill; the clean air being an attractive feature (Western Mail 1909). The increase in population over the weekend is a continuing trend, except these days the weekenders are bike riders, both road and mountain bike, hikers on the Bibbulmun Track, or visitors to the weekend markets or the wineries in the Eastern Rural Districts.

Demographics and the future

A predicted 19% increase in population for Kalamunda town over the next 20 years, is offset by the minimal population growth forecast for the Eastern Rural Districts, Gooseberry Hill, and Lesmurdie. For the City of Kalamunda, the Foothills/Plain suburbs are the growth areas (.id n.d.). Gooseberry Hill has no potential development sites, and the potential for infill developments is low. State and National parks encircle gooseberry Hill. Kalamunda, Lesmurdie and parts of the Eastern Rural districts have some small potential development sites. Infill development is possible in the CBD area and surrounds of Kalamunda where sewerage is connected (.id n.d.)
The population is stable but is also ageing. The Seniors (over 70s) are an emerging group in the Escarpment suburbs, while the Empty Nesters and Retirees are the fastest growing group in the Eastern Rural Districts (id n.d.)

**Bushfires**

The history of bush fires in The Escarpment and Eastern Rural areas of Kalamunda shows a distinct pattern corresponding, not only with the prevailing easterly and westerly breezes, but with the scarp on the west and the valleys on the east. The rise of the scarp on the west is undulating with jarrah and marri forest and high rainfall (Gager and Conacher 2001). The fuel loads, the topography and south-westerly sea breeze followed by the gusty strong east wind, increase the threat to the dwellings above. The two areas of greatest threat on the western side of the scarp are the land below Gooseberry Hill and the area around Lesmurdie Falls.

Most reports of bushfires occur after 1915 and are of burnt agricultural land with some damage or destruction of farm buildings. In 1915 a fire in Gooseberry Hill destroyed the railway platform and other infrastructure items at Gooseberry Hill station, as well as damaging an orchard and associated buildings nearby (Western Mail 1915). A little later it is often ‘weekender’ buildings under threat. For example in 1952 a fire in Orange Valley, Lesmurdie, being the “worst in living memory” with 2,500 acres of bush and grass burnt, one weekender destroyed and many houses threatened (West Australian 1952, 2).

On the east side of Kalamunda, the orchard growing areas Bickley Valley (West Australian 1940) and other rural localities have suffered fires with damage to buildings. Other news reports make oblique reference to numerous bushfires over some time (West Australian 1938).

While frequent fires occur in summer, Kalamunda and Gooseberry Hill have not suffered a catastrophic fire event up to this point. However, Cheney’s (2010) study into the behaviour of a fire in Pickering Brook argues that the escarpment areas are of a higher risk of a highly damaging bush fire due to the higher rainfall

33
and increased fuel loads from the local vegetation. Cheney recommends shorter timelines for controlled burn-offs along the escarpment.

All of The Escarpment and Eastern Rural Districts are identified as Bush Fire Prone (DFES n.d.).

**Anglican Church - St Barnabas**

For the early settlers of Kalamunda and Gooseberry Hill, the opening of a little wooden Anglican church in September 1899, was an indication of the area’s developing importance and status as a settlement.

---

*We can boast of a school, post office, agricultural hall, and now of a church, but a good road is still lacking.*  
*(West Australian 1899, 6)*

---

The congregation moved this building to the developing townscape in 1911. The late 1920s were a time of substantial development of the town of Kalamunda, and a new St Barnabas, built in 1928, was hailed as “the latest addition of public buildings” and of occupying a “commanding position” in the town centre (*West Australian* 1928, 14). While the building was small, the design of the building and its placement on the block of land, was in anticipation of extending the church as the congregation grew with the population. This was viewed as a sign of confidence in the growth of the area (inHerit-State heritage Office n.d.) The commercial centre of the Kalamunda has developed around this brick church, and it currently houses the local amateur dramatic society.

In 1963 the third church was built on its present site on the railway reserve. While the church building is modern and not of traditional church design, its location makes the precinct highly visible and accessible. The local Rotary Club built the memorial rose garden in 1972 with the rose bushes coming from a prominent local rose nursery. It is the rose garden that many people recognise and value, particularly when the roses flower. The Poppy Project display in November 2018, revealed to the parish the extent of community attachment to the rose garden.
Today we feature the beautiful rose garden at St Barnabas Anglican Church in Kalamunda, which has been transformed into a field of poppies to commemorate Remembrance Day and the Centenary of the Armistice that ended the First World War (1914-1918). What a wonderful tribute.


Parochial ecology

The location and size of the St Barnabas Anglican Church precinct ensures it has a place in the community. In 1963, the new, large, rectangular building with no features on the facing walls, must have looked very stark and out of place. There were some older trees still standing, but very little natural bush. The library, built the same year, across the road probably looked the same. Over time, gardens, more trees and landscaped areas softened the look. The large, prominently placed, Memorial Rose Garden contrasts with the lawns of the library gardens. Now, the church grounds have a small number of marri trees and some native plants, but the gardens are predominately exotics. Some, like the two flowering ornamental plums, reflect changing gardening patterns of the area.
There are many flowering ornamental plums around the town of Kalamunda, including a row on the perimeter of the library car park.

Now, with a bush fire prone designation, the marri and other trees are problematic with the changing compliance issues. Maintaining low leaf litter loads and reducing the debris from the marri trees, is difficult. Many residents create bonfires and burn their garden refuse, particularly before bush fire season; however, the church cannot accumulate garden refuse as there is no place to do that.

The Rectory (the house) is part of the precinct. Behind the Rectory is the Nature Strip that joins with the Bibbulmun Track. The City of Kalamunda maintains a fire break directly behind the Rectory. The parish does not have to create and maintain any fire breaks but has to keep the trees pruned, reduce the leaf matter, and maintain the fire zone around the buildings (City of Kalamunda n.d.)

There are no lawns in church or Rectory gardens, and only the Memorial Rose Garden has reticulation. Most of the garden does not require regular watering. There are photovoltaic solar panels on the Rectory and the Hall, enough for the three buildings.

There are a large proportion of people in the congregation who have lived in Kalamunda or Gooseberry Hill for 30, 40, 50 years, and who have a strong sense of connection to the natural environment. They talk about local natural features that are unknown to us, for example, they know where and when the donkey orchids flower, and some of the older parishioners have stories of standing on their roof to bat back flames from a bush fire in Gooseberry Hill.

The church precinct is unfenced, and access is on three sides. People frequently walk through to the shopping centre and the car park is open for use and has some regulars who leave their vehicles there to visit the pub. Local schoolboys use the steps on the church porch to practice skateboarding moves, and young children check the ornamental pond for fish. On the six mornings a week when the Op Shop is open, many people are moving through the area. It is through its location that the people-place connections develop.
The St Barnabas precinct is a busy place, particularly in the mornings. It is a part of the local landscape, and members of our immediate community are at ease as they pass through our grounds on their daily business. It is then critical that we pay careful attention to maintaining the buildings and grounds that they remain inviting. (Anglican Parish of Kalamunda 2018, 7)

Breakfast Conversations is an information sharing and networking group of local business people in Kalamunda. It is for businesses "on the hill" part of the City of Kalamunda centred around the CBD of the town. However, it does include artists who work from their studios at home, businesses in Gooseberry Hill, and local clergy. Its scope is Kalamunda focussed; sometimes conservative, sometimes progressive. Meetings are held monthly, usually in one of the coffee shops in Kalamunda, and with a guest speaker. These speakers present information or promote discussion on current or future issues within the Kalamunda area. For example, strategies for welcoming cyclists; bush fire issues and knowledge learned from the Parkerville fires in 2014; proposed changes to the CBD of the town; and new community-driven enterprises like Ester House for girls and their Brand Label Clothing Op Shop.

As Rector, my husband attends regularly and has presented on the work of the parish, as well as later speaking on the 2018 Poppy Project and the role of public art. His willingness to learn about the physical, built and social environment of the town, and his participation as an artist, made it easier for him to be accepted. For him, St Barnabas is part of the CBD and is affected by any changes to the area. For example, an increase in visitor numbers impacts on limited parking available in town and therefore on the church parking area.

Due to the location of the church, there is often correspondence regarding CBD activities, for example, Application for a Liquor License when Aldi opened a store, and recently the Parish Council provided feedback to the City of Kalamunda on the proposed Kalamunda Activity Centre Draft Plan 2019 (City of Kalamunda n.d.).
The cycle of community life is something that clergy have to learn when they come to a parish. In a bushfire prone area, the cycle starts to revolve around the different fire-related messages put out by the local government. Signage is located before reaching the top of the hill, and at various locations on the hill. One is 300 meters away from the church, before entering into the valleys behind Kalamunda. Burning of garden waste is frequent. Controlled burns occur whenever possible outside of bushfire season and reminders about firebreaks and necessity of permits are posted on electronic noticeboards. Can you hold a service with the use of candles outside the church if it is a total fire ban day or can you have a small fire outside for the Easter Morning Dawn Service? These are questions that my husband has never dealt with in nearly 30 years of parish ministry, but now he has to learn what is appropriate in a bush fire prone area.

One of the hardest issues to deal with in parish work is the church-community relationship. What footprint is the church leaving in the community? Many of the parishioners have known each other for many years and have shared experiences in multiple spheres. They might be neighbours, their children may have gone to school together, their children may have married children of parishioners, there may be shared grandchildren, there may be work-related connections, and shared experiences through church life. Outside of church-based connections, many parishioners have networks based on their social interactions and membership of community-based or located organisations, for example, members of the tennis club or the local Chamber of Commerce.

---

*It is worth noting we tend to rely upon people coming to us. This works because of our location and is good, but I wonder how we might also use some of our energy, initiative and resources to be present in other parts of our community.*

*(Anglican Parish of Kalamunda 2015, 15)*

---

As Rector, my husband has many experiences of meeting people, as he moves around town, who know of him through other people. Opportunities to build networks through the contact of weddings, baptism and funerals has declined as
fewer people use churches for these events. There are still people who like to get married in a church, although this tends to be more in the traditional church buildings, not in a church like St Barnabas.

- 2 weddings, 6 funerals at St Barnabas and 3 interments of ashes in the Memorial Rose Garden. • 4 baptisms and 2 admissions to Holy communion.
  (Anglican Parish of Kalamunda 2016, 7)

The parish runs an Op Shop, and it is open six mornings a week. In six years of observation, it appears to be a mix of meeting the need for items and the need for company. The amount of goods that are dropped off to sell is staggering, and the number of people who wander through ad hoc or regularly, justifies its existence. The parish Op Shop occupies three rooms and the entrance of the Hall. The Op Shop not only provides a place for residents to donate or buy goods, but it also facilitates the transfer of items to targeted groups, for example, brand label clothing is often passed on to Ester House who runs a Brand Label Op Shop.

  We have been giving excess items to the Salvation Army who collect 10 boxes every fortnight. We have a collection of bras that are being sent to various parts of the world, thank to F--- for the organisation of that. We have given baby items to Bandyup Woman's Prison.”
  (Anglican Parish of Kalamunda 2017, 30)

The first Saturday of the month is Artisan Market Day in Kalamunda, and this is a trendy market. It is set up less than five minutes' walk away from the church. On Market Day, the church runs a coffee chop offering brewed coffee and home-made cakes. It is held in the Hall, next to the Op Shop.

St Barnabas has a large hall and meeting rooms. The Op Shop uses three of those rooms, but the other room and the Hall are available for hire. When my husband took over as Rector, the Hall had few community user groups. Over time,
that has improved and meets the needs of dance groups, yoga and Pilates groups, service organisations the Lions Club and Probus, as a function space for parties or large meeting, a quilting group, and an art group. The nearby Community Learning Centre suffered flood damage in 2017 and needed space for classes for a term. This relationship has continued with some classes staying in the meeting room. The Learning Centre is being rebuilt next year, and again the Hall becomes a temporary Community Learning Centre. Local singing and music groups have used the church itself for concerts.

The parish has a strong sense of volunteerism and service to the local and broader community. Volunteers staff the Op Shop, some of whom are church members, and some are not. The monthly coffee shop donates all profits to local and broader not-for-profit organisations, for example, YouthCare for local schools chaplains and Anglicare, the welfare arm of the Anglican diocese.

Non-perishable food is collected and passed on to a church organisation in Forrestfield, Hug Bags made for children going into foster care, Friday coffee morning is free and open to anyone, and the parish will often respond to local or international disaster appeals conducted through the Anglican Board of Missions.

Summary

The provision of community infrastructure and services and the networks that are established or strengthened through these are the most reliable indicators of St Barnabas having a role in community resilience activities. The long-time parishioners are repositories of local knowledge, and my husband has linked to business and community groups to improve his knowledge of the area and the people. If a devasting bushfire occurred in The Escarpment and Eastern Rural Districts of Kalamunda, the parish has the infrastructure and the people to be able to provide refreshments, rest space and access to the Op Shop.
Chapter seven – Case study of Mundaring

Geography

The town of Mundaring is 35 kilometres east of Perth on the Darling Plateau. It is the administrative and business centre of the Shire of Mundaring (Calibre Consulting 2015, 1).

The Shire of Mundaring has localities on the coastal plain, the Darling Escarpment and the Darling Plateau. The Shire has suburban areas on its western border and extensive areas to the east, with small settlements and bushland areas along the way. Water catchments, and National and State parks comprise 45% of the land in the Shire (id n.d.)

Figure 4 Shire of Mundaring with Mundaring town circled. (id n.d.)

The dominant cultural feature of the Shire of Mundaring is the Great Eastern Highway, a national highway, built on the route of the Perth to York road. The farming district of York was established in 1831 (Shire of York n.d.) and by 1842 there was a road from Perth to York (SROWA 1842).
History

The area opened up to timber milling and agriculture, and Mundaring was declared a town in May 1898 (MHHS n.d.). In 1898 work began on the Goldfields Water Scheme to pump water from Mundaring to Coolgardie (Inquirer and Commercial News 1898). The Weir was completed by 1902 (Water Corporation Education n.d.).

The building of the Mundaring Weir coincided with the establishment of railway lines through the hills to Mundaring, and many visitors were attracted to the area to visit the Weir, local orchards and local vineyards (MHHS n.d.). The train also made it possible for people to live in Mundaring on the weekend and travel back to Perth on Monday morning for the working week (Thomson 1908). Weekend tourists and sightseers are a feature of Mundaring town that has never ceased.

For this report, Mundaring town and Weir, Stoneville, Parkerville and the outer eastern region are the most relevant. These are the areas of the Shire of Mundaring closely aligned with the Anglican Parish of Mundaring.

Demographics

The population of the Shire of Mundaring is steady, with minimal growth over the past twelve years. It is an ageing population with an increase in older couples without children (.id n.d.).

Bushfires

As early as 1883 there were reports of bush fires burning telephone poles to Sawyers Valley (Inquirer and Commercial News 1885, 5) and later in 1903, there were reports of bushfires threatening or burning vineyards, orchards and houses in Mundaring (Western Mail 1903, 7). There are currently nine volunteer bush fire brigades in the Shire of Mundaring plus the Mundaring Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service ('Shire of Mundaring - Volunteers' n.d.).

The Shire of Mundaring regards bushfire threat as one of the most significant issues facing the Shire and residents (Shire of Mundaring 2014, 393).
The reasons for this are: the native bush, the undulating terrain, proximity of bush to housing, drying climate, and increasing number of heatwaves.

**Parkerville fire**

On January 12 2014, a fire started in Parkerville. The fire rating for that day was Severe. Perth was in the midst of a prolonged spell of scorching weather, and there was low humidity and very gusty wind forecast (Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub n.d.). All areas of the Perth Hills were on high alert. The fire burnt through 650 hectares of land in Parkerville, Stoneville and Mount Helena (Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub n.d.). The result was 57 houses destroyed, six houses extensively damaged and other houses and sheds damaged. No lives were lost, and there were no serious injuries. Over one thousand people were evacuated, first to Mundaring and then to Swan View. A one-stop recovery Hub was set up in Mundaring (SEMC n.d., 5).

McLennan (2014, 33), in a study of people’s experiences of the Parkerville fires, found that many of the residents under threat from the fires, including those who were evacuated, did not have written fire plans or a belief that a high bush fire risk existed for their property. Community connectedness, as measured by the Sense of Community Connectedness Index, has been used in other communities affected by bush fire to ascertain whether a sense of connection to people in the community leads to better preparation. In this study, the connectedness score was high, but displayed no correlation with preparedness for bush fire. This measure was found to be unreliable in predicting a resident’s willingness to engage in fire preparation, even when living in a high fire risk environment (McLennan 2014, 32). One of the issues raised by this report is how to encourage better awareness and preparation.

**Anglican Church – The Church of the Epiphany**

The Archbishop of Perth opened the Church of the Epiphany on November 1914, after many years of having church services in temporary or hired facilities (Western Mail 1914, 27). The construction of the building had a substantial
contribution from a local businessman who paid for the stone, and the church continues to be used today for Anglican services.

The boundaries of the parish have shrunk over time with changing patterns of residential areas, the opening of new parishes, and the closure and subsequent absorption of others. St Francis, Wooroloo is the only other remaining operational church in the Parish of Mundaring.

Community resilience and parochial ecology (Interview)

The Church of the Epiphany has three buildings – the church, the parish centre, (a previous Rectory), and the Op Shop, (the original Rectory.) The church is a place of interest on the Mundaring Heritage Walk (‘Mundaring Heritage Walk’ n.d.), and is rated as of considerable significance to Mundaring for its design, the local donor who financed a substantial part of its building, and for “its contribution to the Mundaring townscape” (Shire of Mundaring n.d., 5). The parish also values the look of the town and the nearby bush.

We had, notably, last year, a McDonald’s built next to us, which has done everything not to fit in with the surroundings, it’s got, tarmac carpark, big block building, one of their prefab buildings, right next door to us and there is very little sympathy to the local environment in the way it was built and there is just no understanding really of this is the hills.

The McDonald’s building jarred with the parish, as they work to maintain a physical connection to the community through the look of their buildings.

The grounds of the church precinct have had an extensive reworking of the types of plants in the grounds. Like many churches, there was a Memorial Rose Garden; however, when it began to struggle, the parish decided to replace it with West Australian native plants, in keeping with the environment.
We are very aware of where we are in the Hills, we, it must blend in all the things we do.

The parish has a strong sense of responsibility for the stewardship of the natural resources, and photovoltaic solar panels are part of the planning.

The principal leaders of the parish, both lay and clerical, attended a "Are you bushfire ready?" session for community groups. The Rector was very new to the area, at this time, and had a heightened awareness of the risk but being new to an Australian bush fire prone environment was looking to learn two things. One, about being bush fire ready, and two, what role the parish could play. Through engaging with the information session, and using the experiences of the parish members during and after the Parkerville fires, the parish and Shire have drawn up a bushfire plan for the role of the church in the event of another catastrophic fire. This plan involves not just the distribution of material items via the Op Shop, but for the parish centre to be used as a rest centre.

We have our bush fire emergency plan and we have an emergency plan in place for when there is a bush fire that affects other people, not necessarily us, of what we do, how we respond.

The Parish Governance Statute 2016 (Diocese of Perth 2016) requires parishes to have an Parish Council and Office Bearers. Parishes have at least two Wardens, whose role is to assist the Rector, amongst other responsibilities, in the running of the parish and the care of the buildings, including a risk management plan. For a parish in a bush fire prone area effective parish governance is demonstrated by attention to the requirements of both the Diocese and of the local government authority. The parish also has parishioners and volunteers in the Op Shop who are members of local Volunteer Fire Brigades, and who raised bush fire awareness amongst the leaders.

The volunteers in the Op Shop have experience of what people need when houses are burnt down, and what items they will take. This knowledge comes
partly from the direct experience of dealing with people after the Parkerville fires, but also from accumulated existing knowledge of what people are looking for when they come to the Op Shop.

If it’s a catastrophic [fire], like it was six years back when the Parkerville bushfires went through, apparently everybody got together, and we were providing clothes, food, bedding, household items because some people lost everything.

Other examples of expert knowledge found in members of the congregation and in the Op Shop volunteers include a member of the Friends of Kings Park and, who brings knowledge of native flora into discussions on replanting their Memorial Rose Garden with West Australian natives.

The parishioners identified a need to establish more connection with the local community, and this was an expectation placed on the Rector on appointment. While parish clergy, particularly in a commercial and administrative centre of a large Shire, have the opportunities to meet key community people, agencies and businesses, building connections and establishing relationships take time.

I’m just starting to now after three years, to get to know things, like I get invited to schools’ chaplains meetings, and we get invited or I get invited to various other things…

However, the parish members have a range of well-established community networks through different activities and connections. Firstly, as an Anglican church that services a large part of the Shire, it develops a network of parishioners and volunteers from different localities, and these people belong to multiple groups and networks.
The connections are a bit of a spider’s web, they go out from different places as well, like one of the volunteers in the Op Shop is also volunteers with the bush fire brigade.

Secondly, it is part of the Diocese of Perth and has networks with diocesan bodies and personnel.

It [the need for assistance to provide lunch for students] just really spoke to me about how needy the children were in that school, or some of them, so we applied for a grant from the Diocese, and we now get money every year.

Thirdly, as a provider of space for hire by groups, the parish has developed networks community-based organisations.

We have the local bank, the Bendigo bank asked us if they could like hire a couple of rooms from us to have a community bank; their treehouse is moving, it’s going, so they were asking us if they could have a couple of rooms in our parish centre.

Fourthly, through the activity at the Op Shop. Op Shops collect or are given, many more items than what they can sell or store, so they find other groups, or organisations, that can use some particular types of goods. Some might be organisations that serve particular groups of people, for example, homeless women in a specific location, or some might be able to sell items, like unsellable clothes, for rags. These networks might not be within the local community but are typically not far away.

One of them is the homeless charity down in Midland, and so we put, like this time of year, we’d be putting aside sleeping bags, we put aside warm clothing and all that, everything that
comes in that we think that would be good for the homeless charity we keep it to one side.

Again, the expertise and experience in the Op Shop result in a high turnover of stock. The Op Shop has a Facebook page showcasing collectable items as well as the unusual or the quirky. The fundraising activities of the parish revolve around the Op Shop and its customers. The parish holds Market Days with the Op Shop incorporating of local artisan stallholders and small scale fun activities. A fair is held once a year and is structured to be a local community event.

…the little market stalls are local people who make things and they sell them, but the bouncy castle and the roundabout and the magician and the face painting and the foot massage and the spinning demonstration and the Hills choir and all that kind of stuff, is all free for people

The physical resources of the parish available for community use includes a Parish Centre with rooms and a kitchen to hire, and the church. The Parish Centre is also used by the parish to provide for community members, for example, a music activity for young children, a café twice a week; as well by community groups, for example, a quilting group. Interestingly, there is both a Yoga class and a Tai Chi class. Both of these were accepted as the focus was on health and well-being, not religion.

I wasn’t sure about the Tai Chi bit, you know if there was some eastern spiritualism sort of but it’s not it’s just people doing movements to strengthen their muscles you know.

The church was used recently for a music recital, which is a not uncommon use for churches. The acoustics are usually reasonable, and seating is available, and there is often a hall with kitchen facilities for serving afternoon tea or supper.
The use of church buildings by community groups helps develop and strengthen people-place connections.

*People said to me do you know what I've lived here for years and I've never been in this church.*

The parish sees itself as a place where people come to get help: physical, information and spiritual, so it acts a bit like a triage system. Need clothes and household good – Op Shop; need to find out about baptism, weddings or funerals – back of the church; or want a cup of coffee and chat - café two mornings a week in the Parish Centre.

*We have a wealth of information about homelessness, and crisis care and the women's refuge and things like that because that's where most of the people go.*

The Op Shop draws people into the area, and the religious-based value of serving and helping underpins the action and services provided. The parish also provided backpacks for the school in Wundowie to distribute to needy families; emergency food relief; collects items for local charity drives, for example, often the Bendigo Bank will be running a collection for a particular charity, and the parish café donates all takings to a selected charity.

*Well, we've got a whole, in our set up, our church ministry plan, we've got communities outreach ministries.*

The Rector sees a place for the church to be of personal significance to members of the community, if the church is prepared to recognise the needs and interests of the community.

*They might if it were different but people don't seem to understand that people are not going to come and flock into*
church, and I've said if we had something that was really relevant to them they would come flocking to church.

Summary

The parish of Mundaring has a strong sense of people-place connections. The look of the buildings, the grounds and the streetscape are all critical to the parish. The sense of a 'Hills' identity and way of life is prevalent in the interview. The experience of the Parkerville fire has made the parish very aware of their fire mitigation obligations as a part of the community, as well as the impact of a catastrophic bush fire on the local community. The capacity to provide infrastructure and services in such an event is now part of the Shire plan.

The interactions between church and community are mission-oriented, with community engagement strategies like a planned community garden.
Chapter nine – Case Study of Toodyay

Geography

Toodyay is a regional centre located in the Avon Valley 85kms northeast of Perth and is on the border of the Wheatbelt region (.id 2019). The eastern areas of the Shire of Toodyay have sandy loam soils suitable for crop farming, while the town of Toodyay has lateritic gravel, granite and metamorphic rocks. The western parts of the Shire have grazing lands around the Avon River. The significant natural feature of Toodyay is the Avon River and associated hills and valleys.

History

After 1829, large areas of land through the Avon Valley became valuable farming land, by 1839 the Toodyay and York region was a productive sheep farming area and settlements were starting to take shape (Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal 1839). The establishment of a railway line coincided with the Gold Rush of 1887 and a growth in farming production. (Toodyay Visitors Centre 2019).
Toodyay, the townsite, was initially located on a bend of the Avon River and frequently suffered flooding, while another settlement, Newcastle, grew up around the convict depot. In 1911, Newcastle became Toodyay, and the original site of Toodyay became West Toodyay (inHerit-State Heritage Office n.d.).

From 1851 a convict depot in Newcastle increased the growth of Toodyay. Many buildings were constructed by convict labour and those that have survived are part of the tourist attractions for Toodyay (inHerit-State Heritage Office n.d.).

Demographics and the future

Toodyay is predominately rural with small pockets of urban development at Toodyay, West Toodyay and Julimar. Toodyay's population steadily grew from the 1980s until recently, also changing the age distribution (Shire of Toodyay 2017b, 7). Taylor (2014, 7) identifies newer residents as falling into three categories: 'tree-changers'; retirees moving from a more urban environment to a rural one; and 'fly-in and fly-out' workers. This is reflected in the age profile of Toodyay with an increasing number of "Empty-nesters and retirees (60-69)"; "Seniors (70-84)"; "Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59). The population of 0-24 years has declined by 165 since the 2011 Census. The median age is 51 (.id, 2019).

The changing age group profile is the most severe social issue facing the Shire of Toodyay. This changing demographic leads to the need for increased suitable housing in Toodyay town centre and other more urban areas; increased need for social facilities and services for elderly residents including aged care facilities; medical, recreational and social facilities and services for retirees; a decline in working-aged residents; the need for a workforce for providing services for elderly residents; and at the same time, maintenance of current and future opportunities and facilities for younger age groups (Shire of Toodyay 2017b, 7).

Bushfires

There are five volunteer bush fire brigades in the Shire of Toodyay plus the Toodyay Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service ('Volunteering' n.d.). The newer subdivision between Toodyay Road and the Avon River have a Bushfire Ready Group ('Bushfire Ready' n.d.). Bushfire Ready groups are made up of residents of
a particular geographic area whom all face the same bushfire threat, and who come together to encourage and support each other in preparation before the bush fire season and the event of a fire. The aim of the program by DFES is to build community resilience through developing neighbourhood networks, greater engagement in preparedness and knowledge of bushfire behaviour, as well as of the capacity of neighbours in the event of a fire (DFES, n.d.)

The entire Shire of Toodyay is bushfire prone with impacts for construction of new buildings, the level of preparedness of private property before bushfire season, and the mitigation strategies of the Shire (Shire of Toodyay 2017a, 23).

The terrain of Toodyay makes for difficult firefighting, and there is a history of damaging bush fires reported as early as 1853 (Inquirer 1853). The earlier fires impacted mainly on farming land, sheds and machinery, while the most recent severe fire of 2009 destroyed 38 houses and impacted on the parts of Toodyay with increasing population density and housing (Taylor 2014). At the time, this fire was rated as one of the most damaging in WA (Murphy n.d.).

The Toodyay fire started on 29 December 2009 in Severe to Catastrophic fire conditions with a Total Fire Ban in place and destroyed 300 hectares of land and 38 houses (Murphy n.d., 1,3.) The Major Incident Report for the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (n.d., iii) found that the terrain of the area made accessibility difficult, to the point of impossible at times, and combined with the weather conditions of the day, made this fire one of the most severe in WA history. Evacuation plans of residents and response services like the Salvation Army kitchen, Department of Child Protection and Shire Bushfire Recovery Team were activated (Murphy n.d.).

The fire affected the whole community, and one response was to collect and curate the visual, written and oral stories and evidence of the community as well as the stories in the broader media. The community emphasis on local history lent itself naturally to making a historical record of this event, and the Toodyay Bushfire Project Group formed. These records are available for researchers and
the public in Toodyay and the J. S. Battye Library of Western Australian History (Taylor 2014, 5).

In Toodyay, the town Op Shop reopened to both receive donations and to distribute essential personal items and clothing. The CWA Hall and St Stephen’s Anglican Church Hall acted as Relief Centres and distribution points until the sporting facilities and Town Memorial Hall were set up as the “One-Stop Op Shop” (Taylor 2014). These activities relied on many volunteers from many of the local organisations (Toodyay Herald 2010). Residents cared for each other and kept a lookout for people struggling. This care for community members is evident in the collection of visual, oral and electronic stories by the Toodyay Bushfires Project Group (Taylor 2014, 15) and the From the Ashes special edition of the Toodyay Herald (Toodyay Herald 2010). Hamblion (2013, 26) outlined the effectiveness of Toodyay’s local community face-to-face interactions in helping men, particularly those from rural properties, talk about their experiences.

Anglican Church – St Stephen’s

In the early years of the Swan River Colony church building was a characteristic of the Anglican Church, particularly in the rural settlements (Strong 2014, 96). The Toodyay Valley church, St Phillip’s, Culham, was opened for services in May 1853. It was built on land donated by a local farmer, Phillips, and used local materials. In 1862 St Stephen’s, Toodyay was consecrated and used for church services (Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News 1862, 2). Both St Phillip’s at Culham and St Stephen’s in Toodyay are still in use.

Community resilience and parochial ecology (interview)

The parish is led by a two-person partnership, with oversight of the Toodyay-Goomalling parish, and the Gingin-Bindoon parish. The clergy live at Toodyay and share the travelling to the outlying rural areas. The focus is on Toodyay as the more significant regional centre and the centre of community life.

The Anglican church, church hall and Rectory (house) are on the main street in Toodyay, with the Avon River directly behind. The Avon River is an essential feature of the town and the area, and Rector is President of the Friends
of the River for the town. Toodyay participates in the Tidy Town competition, and the parish Tidy Town team has responsibility for the supermarket area.

I'm President of the Friends of the River, it takes up a lot of my time because we do quite a lot, but they're very practical, which is great, so their whole reason for being is that once a month they get out there and do something, they have a project, so we all go along, and that's been a really lovely model because increasingly I've noticed how many people now make a connection by the things they do Monday to Saturday with the gathering on a Sunday.

Stewardship of the environment is a Christian ethic and is evident and aligns with the environmentalist groups in the area. The Rectory roof has photovoltaic solar panels.

The Rector arrived in Australia two and a half years ago from the United Kingdom. Recognising the need to learn about the people and the environment, the Rector has accumulated a remarkable amount of local knowledge.

This [coming to Toodyay from the UK] it feels very different, in the travelling; actually it feels quite dangerous sometimes, when the heat is on and the bushfires surround you, and you're driving to Bindoon or Gingin, and you're going through smoke, and you're thinking shall I keep going or shall I turn back? And then we've had quite serious flooding a couple of times, again do I go or don't I go. How do we, what do we do about this? So there's this kind of very specific, it doesn't make people afraid, but it makes them cautious and sensible. It just alerts you to the land in a way that perhaps I've not been used to before because I just, you know Gloucestershire you just drive down the road and, you don't really think about the practicalities. Oh you might do if it
snows one year, but for the most part you're not having to think, actually I have to keep myself safe, what's my best thing to do, and that is quite difficult here in the summer, you know the travelling.

The historic built environment is a connecting tie for the community and the church. The community massively supported the buy-a-brick campaign to help fund restoration work on the outside of the church, and that restoration work had a flow-on effect in raising awareness of the deterioration over time of sun-dried bricks of many local buildings.

The buy-a-brick campaign required knowledge of the bricks used, the potential for ongoing problems, and the importance of remedial action. While the brickwork skill came from Fremantle, the ability to recognise the importance of the work, the significance for the town, and the recognition that other buildings in the area might need treatment as well, came from the parish. The visible and accessible location of the church, combined with a thank you morning tea at the church while the work was being carried out, meant that many people from the community could see the deteriorating bricks, see the work being done, and speak to the person doing the work. The church brought the knowledge and skills to the community, but the community then learnt from that and applied the new knowledge to their buildings.

He did ever such a lot of jobs afterwards because people saw.

There was a strong thread of community network building in the interview for Toodyay. Sense of place, not only of the physical location of the church but the place of the church in the social aspects of the community, were important to the interviewee. Members of the parish have their networks within the community - in the volunteer fire brigade, in the groups that use the church hall, and others in the Historical Society. While the census figures show a slowdown in population
growth, the perception is that the community is stable, that people live here for a long time, but that the elderly move out for better access to services.

*It’s a very mixed community, but mostly those who are very elderly will move down, back down to Perth for later years, because it becomes complicated to try and travel to hospitals, that sort of thing. There’s a kind of sense of staying but also of people moving as they get older and just need a bit more support.*

The Toodyay District High School is an important place in the community, and the local churches support a YouthCare Chaplain, but there is also some volunteer work undertaken at the school by members of the churches.

There is a small organisation providing food assistance to people in need in Toodyay, and the parish has teamed up with them to pool resources. So, while the parish still provides small scale assistance to people who knock on the door, food donations can now be more targeted and passed on to a better-resourced organisation.

*But those who come too often we will say, look, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday the House (the other organisation) is open, there’s lots of wonderful things to take away for food, and actually for one night a week there’s actually a meal you can sit with other people and eat a meal, go down there, so it’s trying, coz what we were doing was very limited, what she’s doing is very different and it’s great, a kind of mix.*

The parish values recognition of the work of volunteers in the community. There is an annual community event to thank volunteers that occurs during Sunday morning worship times, so the service time is modified so that the parish can also stand on the side of the road and applaud.
We're part of this community, and we're proud of these brave people who fight the things I can't fight, and so we have a faster service, and we rush out, we stand on the roadside.

The church precinct is next to the public open space for events and markets. Music festivals and Farmers Markets are regular events. The parish has a positive and cooperative view of these events. Stallholders are greeted, the parish has a palm-cross making stall before Easter, and engages in carol singing before Christmas.

Vertical networks within the diocesan structure suffer due to the lack of stipendiary clergy in the Deanery. The Avon Deanery is depleted of stipendiary (paid) clergy, with just the two at Toodyay, and two local non-stipendiary (unpaid) clergy in other rural centres. The unavailability of two local non-stipendiary clergy and the distance to travel, makes regular monthly meetings impossible. Senior Staff meetings in Perth and involvement in other Diocesan structures and groups provide opportunities to make links with other clergy and Diocesan office bearers.

The Rector is President of the Friends of the River and also chairs the committee to support the work of Youth Care in the school. Identification of local issues, such as homelessness and at-risk families, indicates a heightened interest in social justice issues. While there are no formal or informal arrangements with the Shire of Toodyay, there is undoubtedly good knowledge of the local social issues.

What happens, quite often, is people come up on the train or down on the train, they get off at Toodyay, so there's often someone sleeping in the railway station whose been kicked out of home, doesn't quite know what to do, who's a bit lost.

The ability of the local economy to provide for the needs of the parish can shape the interconnection between parish and community. Parish fundraising is using a local homestead for an event, and the local Farmer's Market is next door.
to the church on Sunday mornings, and the relationship between the parish and the markets is positive. The parish does not run an Op Shop or other such activities.

The markets are good, and whoever is at this service we always go, and I always go in a collar, make sure I talk to everyone and it's a good, yeah it just getting out there which is very special, it's a real honour to be able to do that, yeah, we've got a good market.

It is ten years since the catastrophic bush fires of Toodyay and the community still has powerful memories of that time. The interviewee was not in Toodyay at that time but is very knowledgeable about the day and the work of the town to support those affected, particularly the use of the community infrastructure, including the church hall. There is a greater awareness of the impact on the community of such an event.

But the story that you hear about those first days and about opening up the Memorial Hall for people to stay and the help that they got and the support in that, those next weeks and they can still, they still have that story, they still talk about it, which is really lovely, it was an extraordinary time. I think people realised there were still others who cared about them. Sometimes you can feel in a community so desperate, desperately you know, and looking out in different directions and there was something very tangible about the concern.

Toodyay is the main centre for the parish, but there are several smaller outer rural towns where services take place monthly. These have tiny congregations. The changing technology over time, particularly transport, means that residents of these smaller places do not do all their shopping and access to services in that place anymore. This shrinking of congregation size and the
unwillingness of people to come to a bigger centre for church services, even when they regularly do so for shopping is a source of frustration given the area these clergy cover and the travelling involved.

You want to go to the dentist, nobody’s coming to Calingiri, you’ve got to go somewhere else.

Summary

The strength of this parish, under the current leadership, is network building and making local connections. The leadership have a very positive attitude toward the local community, making it easier to engage positively with all levels of activities and people in Toodyay. In terms of general resilience, the capacity to seek out information and to apply it to a new context, for example, local weather conditions, the risk of bushfires and the need to drive to a location over an hour away; the strong community networks that are not just faith-based groups; and the secure people-place connections that exist within the community, are all indicators of social resilience-building functions that the church is part of. For specific threat, bushfire, the community has recent experience in that and was able to respond innovatively and practically. The parish in 2009, provided volunteers and hall space and would be able to respond likewise in a future event.

There is a strong sense of knowing the local community and face-to face encounters. The people of the community are very important to the leadership team.

The decline of small rural communities does present an opportunity for new ways of worshipping together and being ‘church’. This challenge of church in a tiny community has been an issue for some time. The presence of local non-stipendiary clergy in the Deanery is an indication of trying to resolve the dilemma.
Chapter ten - Discussion

Introduction

There is an expectation that parish churches can provide material assistance in times of need. When a bush fire threatens a community, churches could be called on to provide human and physical resources, for example, volunteers, hall space, and to serve tea, coffee and cake. To be able to respond in such ways, churches need to have established networks within the community, developed trust within the community, and have demonstrated the ability to be aware of and respond to community need. In other words, to be local and known. So while church activities are in resilience literature as providing services that build disaster resilience, that capacity is built on increased community resilience to specific and general threats.

The siting of churches in communities of place reflects the historical parochial structure inherited from the United Kingdom; however, the church is not separate to the community, but part of it. The church is part of the social-ecological system of that community. Strong, deep ties and knowledge of the ways of the community, strengthen a church’s capacity to respond to threats. Northcott’s (2011) parochial ecology is about local-level interactions and understanding of the way life happens in a community of place. The term “parochial ecology” is not in common usage, but it does present a way of describing the role of a local parish church and give meaning to its interactions with the community. Likewise, Ross et al. (2010) social resilience indicators are about local-level knowledge and commitment to the social, economic, political and environmental relationships of the local area.

Key findings

*People-place connections.* Historical ties of the Anglican Church and the town combined with the location of the churches in the commercial area provides a people-place advantage for each of these parishes. However, it is the sensitivity to the social, built and natural environments that demonstrates people-place connections. Each of the parishes demonstrates people-place connections.
Toodyay parish, does this with its care for an historic building in a town of historic buildings; Mundaring, identifies with a lifestyle and visual amenity referred to “as the Hills”, and that shapes how the parish cares for their buildings; and Kalamunda, with a renewed recognition of the significance of its location, and the responsibility of what that location and rose garden mean to the community.

Knowledge, learning and skills. This application of this indicator focused on the clergy and their willingness to learn new knowledge and skills pertinent to the unique environment. Each of the clergy have taken time to find out about being bush fire aware, to learn what is important to the community, and some of the social issues of the area. The clergy at Toodyay and Mundaring are from the United Kingdom and have been in their parishes for less than five years, and it is uncertain how long they will remain in these parishes. The learning process will begin again when the next priest is appointed.

Incidental learning through unplanned and unstructured encounters, differs in each parish. Six years ago, my husband came to Kalamunda, and over time has learnt about life in the hills and the bush. He lives and works on the same block of land as the church and the hall, and has many face-to-face encounters through the town. The Mundaring Rectory is in an urban area of the Shire of Mundaring, outside of the parish boundaries. The impact of this on day-to-day encounters was not explored. In Toodyay, the Rectory is next door to the church and operates with more of an ‘open door’ policy to the Rectory than some other places. Some understanding of the specific parochial ecology was evident in each parish.

Community networks. Each parish had identifiable community networks established by the clergy. The existence of strong networks generated by parishioners was acknowledged; however, the understanding of the significance of these networks varied. Community networks is an area that clergy may need to be more cognisant of in much broader terms, not just as a way of parishioners knowing people to invite to church. The three themes of clergy responses identified after the Christchurch earthquake; responsibility to the community, reach of the church, and activism and advocacy (Brogt, Grimshaw, and Baird 2015); all
require networks beyond that of the clergy. If a parish needs to respond to a disaster event, it will require more people than the congregation alone would provide. The networks of parishioners can bring in other community-based groups as well as individuals.

*Engaged governance.* This area was much harder to evaluate. Some clergy, like my husband, has strong engaged governance with the Diocesan structure, and others are more involved at a local level. Given the short time that the clergy of Mundaring and Toodyay have been in their parishes, it is unsurprising that engagement with decision-making at the local level was generally weak.

*Diverse and innovative economy.* The interview at Toodyay referred to the “hall economy” of the area. All three parishes have a meeting space for hire, and Mundaring and Kalamunda have successful Op Shops. Engagement with the local economy is mostly through the Op Shops, hall hire, and fundraising activities of the parish. As a parish, sometimes fundraising events use local venues; however, other engagement in local businesses, such as supporting a new local business, is limited. Individual parishioners could be more engaged in supporting established and new local businesses.

*Community infrastructure and services.* Each of the parishes is engaged in providing services to the local community and each is tailored to the needs of that community. However, the willingness of the church leaders to find out about the actual demography and issues of the community from a local government perspective, is missing. The parishes are in localities with ageing populations. Many older residents have lived in the area for many years, and local governments are wrestling with ways of accommodating and meeting the needs of older residents. If churches are the voice of the unvoiced, this dilemma amongst the residents need to be raised within church structures and with governing bodies.

The evaluation of the social resilience indicators of the three case study parishes found different areas of strength for each parish. Kalamunda is active on
the community infrastructure and services, with moderate community networks; Mundaring has strong people-place connections, with moderate community networks; and Toodyay has strong community networks and working knowledge, skills and learning, with moderate levels of engaged governance. Being a part of a diverse and innovative economy was evident in all three parishes, as Op Shops or other transactional activities like fundraising activities are held in the community.

The areas of weaknesses are engaged governance and the people-place connections with indigenous use of the land. Engaged governance might appear stronger in these parishes if the information came from the parishioners. Acknowledgement of traditional owners of the land is standard as a printed statement, but no mention in the interviews. This omission may have been a flaw in the research design.

The parishes that have experienced a catastrophic bush fire in recent times, Toodyay and Mundaring, are significantly more bush fire alert than Kalamunda. From their experiences, Toodyay and Mundaring are more aware of the impact on the community, and Mundaring has a formal role in the Shire's management plan for bush fires. Each parish can offer local-level assistance in a bush fire emergency. There are appropriate buildings, halls and parish centres, in each parish that could serve tea, coffee, food and offer a safe space. Each parish would have parishioners, and other affiliated volunteers that could engage in the type of local face-to-face contact referred to by Webber and Jones (2011).

The ecclesiology of church leaders shapes how they talk about the church-community interface and understanding of the role of the church in the community. The three parishes each display elements of the three models of parish ministry – mission-focused; community engagement focused; and service-oriented – with a greater emphasis on one area. Op Shops are site for community engagement, but Mundaring has an active mission-oriented approach to community, while Kalamunda has a more service orientation. Toodyay is more service-oriented with community engagements elements.
Future directions

The interviews reveal that parochial ecology exists within parish churches. However, language for describing the local interactions between the people and the environment, the ecology of the area, does not necessarily exist within Anglican parish clergy. An ecclesiology of parishes as part of a local-level ecology is an area of study that could provide greater depth and build resilience in the parish system. Churches are engaged in community resilience activities, and these vary according to local need, history of the parish, history of the ecclesiology of the parish, and the theology of the church leadership. Encouraging all clergy to reflect on why Anglicans have a parish system and what that means for the community, could help church leaders develop better-targeted community engagement projects.

Secondly, church leaders, both at the parish level and higher Diocesan level, need to be aware that if a bush fire occurs, then the community might expect the parish church to be able to respond. The study of clergy after the Christchurch earthquake (2010) highlighted that the pressures on the churches to respond came from community expectations and the community belief that the parish could help. It is not about whether the church is putting itself out in the community offering expertise; it is that the community expects churches with a strong connection to the community, will be able to help. Given that January is a time when many clergy and Diocesan staff are on leave, this could be problematic. Again, reflecting on these expectations and risk in bush fire prone areas of Perth could lead to better planning for bush fire season.

Thirdly, linking to the above recommendations, Parish Office Bearers training days should target particular risk areas, like parishes in bush fire prone designated areas. The requirements for preparing property before the bush fire season can be quite onerous on aging or financially struggling parishes. There needs to a recognition of the burden placed on these parishes to prepare, to be involved in a bush fire emergency, and then for recovery. Specific and directed sharing of knowledge and experiences would be beneficial.
Fourthly, clergy in the Perth Hills could benefit from training on disaster recovery strategies. Maybe Deanery boundaries need to be redrawn to create a Perth Hills Deanery with Kalamunda, Lesmurdie, Mundaring, Darlington, Roleystone and Toodyay, with Armadale also a possibility. These parishes have similar parochial ecologies and history, plus all are highly vulnerable to bush fires.

Fifthly, an exploration of how parishes can increase their interactions with the local community through supporting regional or local economic activities, engaging in local governance bodies, and greater recognition of the local indigenous culture of the area.

Finally, clergy moving to parishes in bush fire prone areas need to be better prepared and understand the risk to themselves, their families, their congregations and their church associated with that location.

Conclusion

The role of local organisations in disaster events can be relevant to the community. The Perth Hills are very vulnerable to catastrophic bush fire events. Local organisations with a service ethic, like churches, need to be prepared for such events. Networks, local knowledge, strong people-place connection, as well as engaging in the issues and decision-making of the community, are useful supports for any infrastructure and services that the parish has to offer, like a hall or numerous volunteers. The role of local churches in community resilience is an area that needs further research, particularly for parishes in the urban sprawl on the Swan Coastal Plain, where history, community identity and the sense of parochial ecology is harder to find.
References


Absolon, E.A. 1901. ‘Town Lots Calamunda’.
https://archive.sro.wa.gov.au/uploads/r/srowa/7/f/7fb9407eae7e862b53d256b0830a1cda6ddbe3a5b757011b38ef9fc3a294736d/Cons3868_item_181.jpg.

All we need is right here. n.d. ‘Canning Mills’. All We Need Is Right Here (blog).


http://search.proquest.com/docview/1459207911/abstract/5F646422B9A04F0DPQ/1.


http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/99366e28-d345-47ba-b83e-74acb1d1e75c.


———. n.d. ‘Toodyay Court House (Fmr) and Former Convict Depot Archaeological Sites’. Accessed 1 September 2019d.


McCracken, Mark. 2012. ‘Communities: Community Engagement and Service Basics’. Anglicare WA.


Rapport. 


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2016.05.023.


