

Croajingolong Calling

with Jude & Andy Benton • November 2025



The most exciting news for the Parish of Croajingolong in 2025 was the ordination of Ken Spackman (one of our Mallacoota Wardens) as a Deacon. On Saturday 18 October, a group of around 10 or so from the parish travelled to Sale Cathedral to witness Ken's ordination.

We have been truly blessed by Ken and his wife, Anne, over the last five years they have lived in Mallacoota. Ken is an excellent home group leader and preacher and also has a particular ability to pastorally care for men, which occurs primarily in the hardware store he owns. It has been a privilege to walk alongside Ken through his discernment and ordination preparation.

Everywhere has its own pattern to the year, its own way of moving through the seasons. While most people have spring, summer, autumn & winter, in Croajingolong, the seasons could be termed, *Tourism* (December till Easter), *Get it done before winter* (April/ May), *Where is everyone?* (June – September) and *Frantic* (October/ November). Our last newsletter covering the end of *Tourism* and *Get it done before winter* had exciting stories of Easter and pilgrimage...

But it's harder to write about the season of *Where is everyone?*. Less seems to happen, as the tourists stop visiting, many locals travel north or overseas, and winter sicknesses and stormy cold weather keep even the most faithful parishioners at home. Yet when I reflect on winter this year, we had much to rejoice about.

As part of HOPE25, we hosted a series of movie screenings on Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings. Surprisingly, the Friday morning sessions became the most popular, with several non-churchgoing locals attending to watch the movie, enjoy refreshments and take part in discussions afterwards.



Part of our congregation is made up of holiday-home owners, who, when in Mallacoota, come to St Peter's. This year, we've found many are engaging more intentionally with the church while in town – coming more often, volunteering at the Opshop, or even staying an extra day to attend church before heading home.

Please pray for energy, strength, safety and enough support for our Opshop volunteers, during the upcoming busy summer season.




Banner Image: Mallacoota from the air

Circle Image: Jude & Andy

Middle Image: Jude, Ken & Bishop Richard Treloar at the ordination service

Bottom Image: The Mallacoota contingent who travelled to Sale to support Ken & Anne Spackman



The colours of Channel Country, QLD

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Throughout the start of 2025, we struggled to get our home groups going, due to the constant movement of people heading away to visit family or for appointments out of the area.

To achieve more consistency in numbers, we combined the groups into one to work through 'Ripple Effect', an Australian-developed series on sharing our faith. This has proved to be our most popular study series yet, with up to 12 attendees at any time. The series invites participants to intentionally pray each day for five people; that they may have open doors to share their faith with them and the courage to speak when the opportunity arises.

We've heard people sharing about the most remarkable God-encounters and conversations with their prayed for friends, and we pray these relationships grow.

Please pray for ongoing open doors to evangelism and sharing our faith that have been awakened during the 'Ripple Effect' Series.

Now we're into *Frantic* season. Basically, everyone emerges from the hibernation of winter and wants to do a year's worth of events/activities before the start of December when *Tourism* season begins. For the church, this happened to coincide with three special events: Ken's ordination, a visit from our Bishop, and a visit from Greg & Karen Harris.

Sometimes being in the far corner

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of the state can feel isolating, which is why we appreciate our connections with the Diocese of Gippsland and BCA.

During October, we were fortunate to have Bishop Richard and Greg & Karen Harris visit Mallacoota and preach/lead a service each. Both services were part of our series on *How to read the Bible*, examining how to make sense of the Bible in its literary & historical context, so that we can also use it wisely and effectively in our own lives.

Here are some specific prayers for the looming busy summer...

Safety on the roads and waterways, in the caravan parks and accommodation; may those travelling find peace and enjoyment in their time away. Blessing on the SUFM and Theos teams as they will be here over the New Year again.



Flying home to Mallacoota from the Gold Coast

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Outside of the Parish activities, we've also faced a busy year.

Greg Harris's challenge at the last Field Staff Conference, for each of us to be 'all in', challenged us to get serious about going from flying as a hobby to instead becoming something that could be used to support mission and ministry.

We upgraded our little plane to an older model Piper Arrow, in which Andy will be able to do a Commercial Pilot's License and Instrument Rating. As well as making our flying a lot safer, giving options for flying at night and through clouds, these are the prerequisites for flying in the mission aviation field.

Andy & I customarily take a break during the *Where is everyone?* season, in order to be back on deck for *Frantic* and *Tourism* seasons.

This year, we had arranged for the plane to have some new instruments installed at the Gold Coast airport. We had intended to collect it, fly back over the Channel Country of QLD that had flooded earlier in 2025, and stop in to visit Field Staff along the way.

Unfortunately, due to delays with the plane, we didn't get quite so far as we intended and ran out of time for visiting. But we still got to see the incredible wildflowers

of the flood country, which were similar to the wildflowers that were prolific in Mallacoota the year after the fire. It was also a reminder of how much of the country is more accessible by air than by road.

While in Queensland, we were able to visit the Brisbane BCA office and thank Mike, Craig & Sarah for their time and hospitality. Additionally, while there, Mike recorded a video

that will be included with this newsletter to support our parishes.

The year is rapidly drawing to a close, as we prepare for our eighth Christmas/Summer/Tourism Season in the Parish.

We are thankful to each person and parish for their ongoing support and prayer for us here in Croajingolong.



Sarah McKinnon, Craig Buchanan, Mike Uptin and Andy & Jude at the BCA office in Brisbane

God Bless,
Jude & Andy

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about Bush Church Aid who support us in the Cooperating Parish of Croajingolong

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