

The Connells in Cowra

with Ben & Alissa Connelly • September 2025



In Cowra, the protestant churches combine to offer Protestant SRE (Special Religious Education) in the two government primary schools (Catholic SRE is also available). Alissa teaches Stage 2 classes, while Ben teaches Stage 3. One of the blessings of teaching SRE is the opportunity to get to know the school community – both the students we teach, as well as their teachers.

Across the two schools, classes are taught as Kindergarten, Years 1 and 2 (Stage 1), Years 3 and 4 (Stage 2), and Years 5 and 6 (Stage 3). This year, there are five teachers teaching across the two state schools in Cowra.

Most teachers teach at both schools, but the teaching of Stage 2 is shared between Alissa and the local Presbyterian Minister. Alissa has been teaching SRE for two whole terms and is becoming more comfortable teaching her 25 Stage 2 students, as she is better at gauging their level of understanding.

Ben continues to teach the Stage 3 children at both schools with the curriculum 'Big Questions.' For all other classes, we use the Connect curriculum, and this year we are teaching the Year C curriculum. C1 curriculum includes the story of Israel from Judges through the split in the kingdom and then to the time of the exiles, and also the return to Jerusalem (Judah only).

Then, in the second half of the year, or when the C1 curriculum is completed, we look at Jesus and some of his miracles in the Gospel of John as part of the

C2 curriculum. The focus on the kings of Israel in the first half of the year also pointed to Jesus as the promised king (2 Samuel 7), and the only perfect king, the one who was able to live a perfect life and die for our sins to bring us back to a Holy God.

Many of our SRE students will never set foot in our churches, so please pray that God speaks to them powerfully by His Spirit through His word and brings them understanding. Please pray that our students understand that they can't live a good life and be right with God on their own; that the only way of being right with God is to accept the gift God offers of His son, Jesus, and live with Jesus as king of their lives.

Please also pray for a new high school SRE teacher to be found, as the former teacher had to finish up earlier this year as they started a new job as a youth minister in a neighbouring town.

Alissa is also furthering this relationship building with the students and teachers of the school community through volunteer student reading and being on the P&C committee.

Banner Image: Cowra

Circle Image: The Connelly family

Middle Image: Ready to travel by plane

Bottom Image: On the plane back to Sydney



The new parachute in use

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Please pray that as a visible Christian presence in this school, Ben & Alissa, together with the other scripture teachers, will point both students and their teachers to a loving creator who wants to be in relationship with them. Please pray that both schools will continue to be supportive of SRE and teachers.

St John's musical playgroup

St John's musical playgroup continues to go very well. We have already got our 'regulars,' and there is now an average of 11 children each time we meet.

This term the theme has been animals, and we had a bear-themed week last week, where each child brought their own stuffed animal or teddy bear. We had a 'teddy-bears picnic,' went on a bear hunt, read bear stories and made some bear craft.

In a few weeks, we are having a sheep theme. We plan to sing some sheep-themed songs, do a sheep craft and read "Where is the Green Sheep?". We will also read the story of the Lost Sheep from the Bible.

Please pray that as the children and their parents listen to the story of the Lost Sheep, they would understand how much they are loved by our creator God, that he would leave the 99 sheep and go and find them if they were lost. And that they would understand in sending Jesus, God has sent someone to rescue us.

Praise God for the way that we can teach these little ones through songs that God made everything, and that people are special because God made them and loves them. Pray that their understanding of God deepens as they continue to come to playgroup week after week.

Praise God that more members of St John's Church have volunteered to help out with playgroup

Praise God that more members of St John's Church have volunteered to help out with playgroup and for the continued support of BCA supporters and our partner churches. A partner church family recently supplied us with a new and bigger parachute to use at playgroup now that we've grown in number!

Please pray for wisdom for Ben & Alissa on how to continue encouraging members of the congregation to serve in new ways, particularly in the area of children's ministry, where they will likely need to step out of their comfort zones.

BCA Connect and family holiday

Early July saw us travel as a family by plane to Northern Queensland to support QLD/NNSW BCA Connect events.

The first BCA Connect event we spoke at was in Cairns on Saturday 5 July, followed by a similar event on Saturday 12 July in Townsville. Both Sundays also saw us attending local churches, and in Ben's case, preaching as well.

We were thankful for the opportunity to speak about our ministry, to connect with some more BCA supporters, to share prayer points, and be prayed for.



Games with the new parachute

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Thanks must go to QLD/NNSW Office Manager Sarah McKinnon who helped look after the kids during the BCA Connect sessions, and to both her and Mike Uptin for all their work in planning the two successful events.

Please pray that Connect events will continue to help grow BCA's supporter base, so that Field Staff can be prayed for regularly, and so BCA can continue to financially support us.

Between these events, and after the second event, we were able to spend some time enjoying the warmer weather in Queensland and exploring the local sites and pools. The kids, in particular, enjoyed swimming in July (most days) and spending lots of time with their grandparents, who joined us in Townsville. It was also a huge highlight to go on two plane trips! These were the first plane trips that Vivienne remembers, and the first plane trips for Ezekiel.

Bathurst Diocese weekend away

In mid-August, as a family, we were able to attend the Bathurst Diocese weekend away at Ridgecrest Convention Centre, in Mumbil (about two hours north of Cowra). Although, sadly, we were the only ones to attend

from the Cowra Parish, this conference was the biggest yet for the Diocese!

Reverend Mark Earngey (Head of Church History Department at Moore College) spoke to us all on the topic of 'Church.' It was a terrific opportunity to be fed in the Word, to fellowship with others in our Diocese, and, in particular, for Josiah and Vivienne to experience a 'Sunday School' program. Sadly, this is something that our kids don't get to enjoy very often.

Praise God for informative and thought-provoking talks from Mark and that both Josiah and Vivienne warmed up quickly to their respective programs!

Also praise God for those who organise this event year after year, so that smaller churches like ours, who are unable to do their own church weekend away, can really benefit from the teaching and fellowship.

Family news

In August, we celebrated Josiah's 7th birthday, and Vivienne attended her first school orientation, in preparation for starting school in 2026. Ezekiel's little personality is starting to emerge, and at 17 months, he is adamant that he is no longer a baby and wants to be involved in everything his big brother and sister are doing. He absolutely hates being excluded!



Blessings in Christ,

Ben, Alissa, Josiah, Vivienne & Ezekiel

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