WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD, WE MOVE TOGETHER INTO OUR FUTURE
Summary of Bishop Peter Ingham’s Pastoral Letter, Pentecost 19 May 2013
The following are excerpts from the pastoral letter

“As promised, on this Feast of Pentecost I am happy to share with you the outcome of the extensive education and consultation process, Parishes Working Together. This incorporates our plans to continue together, clergy, religious and laity, to build vibrant and sustainable Church communities in the Diocese of Wollongong as we move into the future as bearers of Christ’s love. ..."

“In February this year, with the distribution of the workbook, Parishes Working Together, I launched our Education Process. ...The education process in parishes was followed by Regional Consultations during the month of April.”

Key challenges and possible solutions were identified through this process and are included in the full copy of the pastoral letter.

“At the Regional Consultations, possible regional boundaries and models for parish configurations were accepted in principle. It is understood that regions themselves, under the leadership of their pastors, will be given the opportunity to make amendments, in consultation with their parish communities. It is anticipated that this will be progressed in the near future.”

“All recommendations from the education process and regional consultations have been compiled into a comprehensive report ... The full report will be finalised in June 2013...”

“...After prayerfully considering your recommendations and the wisdom of my advisory groups, I now put before you, as your Bishop, the plan for the next few years to ensure that we build vibrant, sustainable Church communities.” [The following summarises the plan outlined by Bishop in more detail in his pastoral letter]

- A Diocesan Strategic Plan will be developed
- The Diocese will be divided into seven regions
- As is necessary, boundaries will be determined for new parishes
- The clustering or grouping of parishes will take place
- Cluster Planning Committees and, in time, Regional Planning Committees will be established
- Terms of Reference will be established for Cluster and Regional Planning Committees.
- Staff of the Office of the Bishop will assist priests and parishes in all these endeavours
- Following the positive response of participants from:
  - Thirroul, Helensburgh, Bulli and Corrimal; and
  - Lumen Christi Pastoral Region and West Wollongong
  And their willingness to initiate some changes in the immediate future, I have invited the relevant parish priests and their assistants to establish two pilot programs in 2013
- the Diaconate and a Lay Pastoral Ministry model will be introduced
- A Diocesan Communication Strategy will be established

“...These actions will commence this year and many will be realised in the next two or three years...”

“At this significant time in the history of our Diocese, a time of renewal and change, the dedication and commitment of our clergy, religious and parishioners fills me with joy and a genuine belief that together we will be able to carry forward with energy and renewed vigour the mission of the Church into the future...: