

The Olive Way



Future Directions 2022-2024

Our Overall Vision

The Olive Way is a welcoming space, operating at Brunswick Uniting Church (BUC). It began in 2007 and employs two part-time workers. An average of 45 people attend on each of the 3 days and they are supported by up to five volunteers each day.

BUC is committed to supporting this ministry and to ensure that it is *to be a community sustained by Christian hospitality*.

In our modern, fast-paced, hi-tech world many people miss out on the opportunity to feel part of a safe, accepting and inclusive community. The Olive Way aims to help meet this need.

In the 2018 review of the Olive Way, 9 key recommendations were identified, including further development as a hub with enrichment activities, attending to pastoral care of guests, greater connection with the worshipping community and other local organizations, greater support for volunteers, maintaining a safe and respectful environment and greater opportunity for guests' ownership.

The 2021 review has identified that these 9 key recommendations from 2018 are not achievable under the present staffing arrangements. If the Olive Way is to be a community under-pinned by Christian hospitality and evolve according to the 2018 goals it will need to be carried forward in a sustainable manner. The 2021 review has proposed a re-shaping of the finite Olive Way staffing resources with a focus on organizational development and sustainability.

Our Focus for the coming three years

The most recent review of the Olive Way makes a number of recommendations:

- The first of these is to build upon the strengths of Olive Way by focusing on the aspects of Olive Way that are unique and amplifying them through telling our story.
- The second recommendation seeks to address our vulnerabilities by addressing the gaps in our staffing structure.

It recommends the creation of an Olive Way Operations Coordinator working 13 hours per week and an increase in the Olive Way Pastor's hours to 22.8 hours per week (0.6 EFT). This will give further impetus to work towards the goals set by the 2018 review, as well as enable the Olive Way Pastor to focus on *developmental* aspects, and the promotion of Olive Way through telling our story.

Whilst the new staffing arrangements do not allow for a dedicated cook, food and beverages will always be available at the Olive Way. The Olive Way will also seek to provide a communal meal but will investigate alternative and creative ways of providing this which do not rely on dedicating staff resources to its preparation. The final shape of the lunches will be determined by a consultative process that will seek the views and aspirations of the Olive Way guests. The idea will be to think outside the box, rather than be restricted to what we have always done for the sake of it.

By re-shaping the staffing there will be a greater opportunity to realize the following:

1. **Managing risk, maintaining safety, and sustainability:** Re-shaping the staffing will ensure that the organizational knowledge is not embedded in one person and spreads the leadership more widely. There will be the opportunity for a team approach to maintaining a safe space, problem solving, and developing creative activities. There will be the opportunity to develop additional *volunteer leaders* to further spread the tasks of leadership.
2. **A focus on broader developmental areas:** The Pastor will be able to focus on broader developmental areas previously identified such as volunteer development and support, new enrichment activities, developing deeper relationships with the BUC worshipping community, building relationships with other faith-based and secular organizations in the area, and articulating the Olive Way story through the lens of the gospel.
3. **Continuity:** This proposal ensures that Olive Way can run smoothly in the event of the absence of one of the leaders and maintains continuity with the participants.
4. **Women in Leadership:** A greater focus on women in the leadership of Olive Way will lead to a greater potential for engagement with, and support for, women guests.

As mentioned previously, the proposed change of hours will help further the goals of the previous review by allowing a focus to be more than just operational matters. The following gives some idea of what can be achieved alongside the 2018 recommendations with the change of focus for the Pastor and the appointment of a dedicated Olive Way Operations Coordinator.

The Nine Key Recommendations (2018):

1. **Develop Olive Way as a Hub:** this would allow the Olive Way Pastor to further support enrichment groups, and give scope to help initiate other groups, or support people to get them started.
2. **Review Wednesday as the designated lunch day:** While we have already moved the lunch day to Tuesday, increased hours would enable to pastor to further review the nature of the meals, consult with the Olive Way guests, and draft proposals, whilst also coordinating with other agencies and planning lunches.
3. **Develop stronger links with other agencies:** Whilst the pandemic has forced us to increase our communication and coordination with the Salvos, the Ecological Justice Hub and other agencies, we would seek to build on the good will we have fostered. Moving away from directing operational matters increases opportunities to meet and work with other agencies.
4. **Develop the pastoral support available to guests:** a well coordinated second in charge will allow the Olive Way Pastor to work in tangent with the deputy with regards to pastoral support. This would also allow the Olive Way Pastor to further develop 'Hosts' and provide support for them. Hosts will be a key component of the pastoral support.
5. **More involvement/linkages with the church and other services:** Further hours will allow the Olive Way Pastor to participate more frequently at BUC, as well as to work more closely with the church's other activities.
6. **Better tracking of guests:** The pandemic has allowed us to improve on this area whilst we have been closed. The Olive Way Pastor will be able to further the work begun in this area by developing systems that allow us to do this in a way that is safe, doesn't invade privacy, and is respectful of the guests' wishes. Similarly, a Olive Way Operations Coordinator will be able to monitor the flow of people in a much more consistent and reliable way.
7. **Provide structured support for volunteers:** We have done much in this area since the review, but still more can be done. The Olive Way Pastor would be responsible for developing training for the volunteers, coordinate volunteer social events, provide debriefing and coaching, and checking in. Similarly, developing hosts to sit alongside guests will require intentional support.
8. **Tackle and monitor disruptive behaviour:** Training for this would be developed and given to all volunteers, with extra support given to volunteer leaders, the Olive Way Operations Coordinator, and hosts, to help manage and tackle challenging behaviour. This would ensure that Olive Way is seen as a peaceful environment, and in particular, welcoming for women.
9. **Strengthen opportunities for guests' ownership/control:** An area that has always proven challenging, this would create the opportunity to encourage and recruit Olive Way guests to take a further role in operating the Olive Way, setting the tone, developing ideas, and becoming leaders. This can be done by getting alongside them, delegating responsibility and helping build their capacity. It is a long-term strategy that builds leadership from the 'bottom' up.

What you can do:

We would love for you to join us to help contribute to building the Olive Way with these exciting new directions in the coming year. There are at least four ways you can help us do this:

Your giving

Needless to say, this renewed vision will require extra funding. Between the two positions, we will need an additional \$19,000 per year. To ensure our sustainability, we invite you to make an occasional or regular gift (direct to BUC's bank account, marked "for Olive Way").

Your time as a volunteer

Olive Way is always looking for volunteers. Volunteers are co-creators of the welcoming environment that is Olive Way. There are a number of roles available that may better suit your personality and gift-set. Please speak to Peter (0431 193 810) to find out ways that you can be involved.

Your prayer support

As a ministry of Brunswick Uniting Church, Olive Way is a key component to what we do and how we interact with our neighbourhood. We invite you to continue to pray for Olive Way as we reach out to our neighbourhood in love and in the Spirit of Christ.

Joining the Steering Committee:

Olive Way is governed by a dedicated steering committee that oversees all its operations. Current membership consists of Richard Arnold (chair), Ann Soo, Kirsty Bennet, Mikul Dennison and the Olive Way Pastor. We would welcome new participants who can help guide and shape the Olive Way and keep us accountable to our vision and purpose.