



## Vision Paper

2017 and beyond

### Our mission

In the book of Matthew, we see that Jesus is the king. He was born as the long-awaited king who will save his people from their sin. He burst onto the public scene as a radical king, a powerful king, a gracious king. And yet he was constantly surprising people. Against all expectation, Jesus was the king who suffered and died on a cross. But in God's great power, Jesus is now the risen king!

Because Jesus is the king, he calls people to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him (Matt 16:21-28). As the king, he graciously includes people in his kingdom (Matt 20:1-16). And as the king with all authority, he calls his people to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20).

That's why our mission statement is 'growing followers of Jesus'. We seek to grow as followers of Jesus and grow **new** followers of Jesus. It's who we are and what we do! It's our joy and privilege!

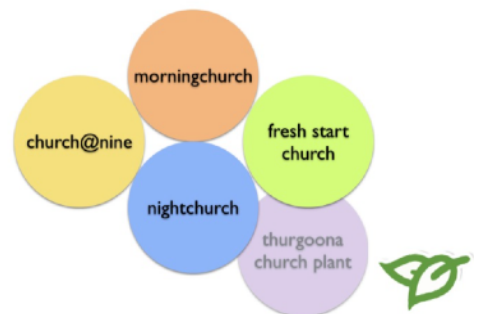
### Our vision

Church planting is a strategy for growing followers of Jesus. It's not the only strategy, but it is a good one. Church plants help God's people reach out into the community. According to a recent Australian survey, 33% of people in church plants are unchurched or dechurched compared to 6% in established churches.<sup>1</sup>

But church planting also helps grow existing churches. Tim Keller writes, 'Vigorous church planting is one of the best ways to renew the existing churches of a city, as well as the best single way to grow the whole body of Christ in a city.'<sup>2</sup> In other words, church planting grows current and new churches. The planting and growth of fresh start church in 2014 has shown the truth of these ideas.

Church planting remains a key part of our vision. As a group of four inter-dependent churches, we have been working towards this collective vision:

*Recognising humbly that as we labour, it is God who gives the growth:-*  
**By the end of 2017 we will have employed a fourth pastor and planted a fifth church in Thurgoona.**



The elders of APC have been prayerfully planning for this vision and our churches have been preparing for it too. That's why we had church goals for 2016!

In his kindness, God has been answering prayers and we have grown in numbers and in maturity. Our churches are healthy, vibrant, flourishing gatherings of God's people. Our elders and committee of management have laid the groundwork for our vision to be realised. The stage is now set to employ a fourth pastor and to plant a fifth church in Thurgoona.

### Our church plant

Thurgoona is the "growth corridor" in Albury. A council report states, 'Thurgoona is growing at a rate of approximate 3.5% per annum while Albury as a city is growing at over 1% per annum.'<sup>3</sup> It is forecast that the Thurgoona-Wirlinga area will support a population of 50,000 people over the next 50 years.<sup>4</sup> On top of this, there are not many churches currently in Thurgoona. With fresh start church in Albury, the elders believe Thurgoona is an excellent location for our next church plant.

<sup>1</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Support, Experience and Intentionality: 2015-16 Australian Church Planting Study* (LifeWay Research, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Tim Keller, *Center Church* (Zondervan: Michigan, 2012), p. 361

<sup>3</sup> RPS, *Thurgoona Wirlinga Precinct Structure Plan* (RPS Australia East, Fortitude Valley, QLD, 2013), p. 8

<sup>4</sup> RPS, *Thurgoona Wirlinga Precinct Structure Plan* (RPS Australia East, Fortitude Valley, QLD, 2013), p. 6

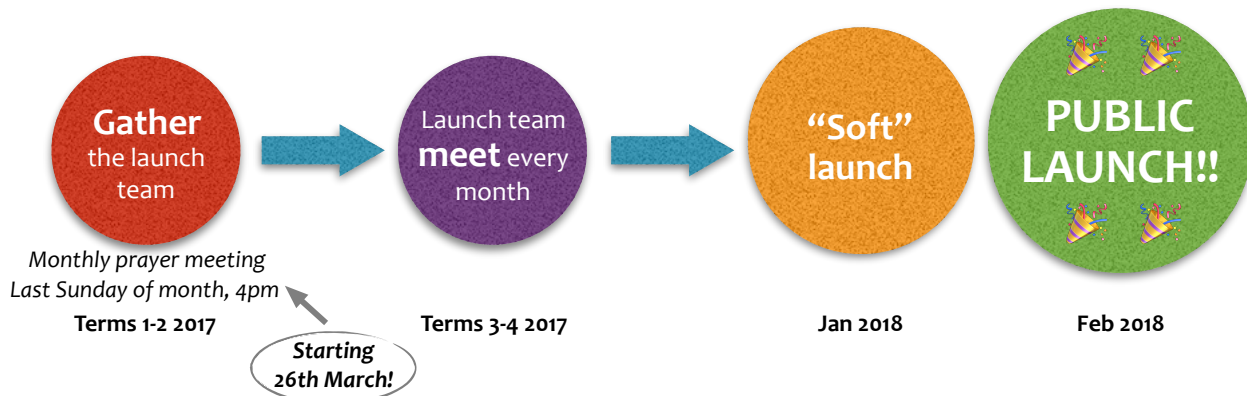
In their prayerful discussions, the elders have agreed on the following details:

**Church planters:** Mike & Kara Wong

**Launch team:** 35-40 adults

**Time:** Sunday 4pm

**Plan:**



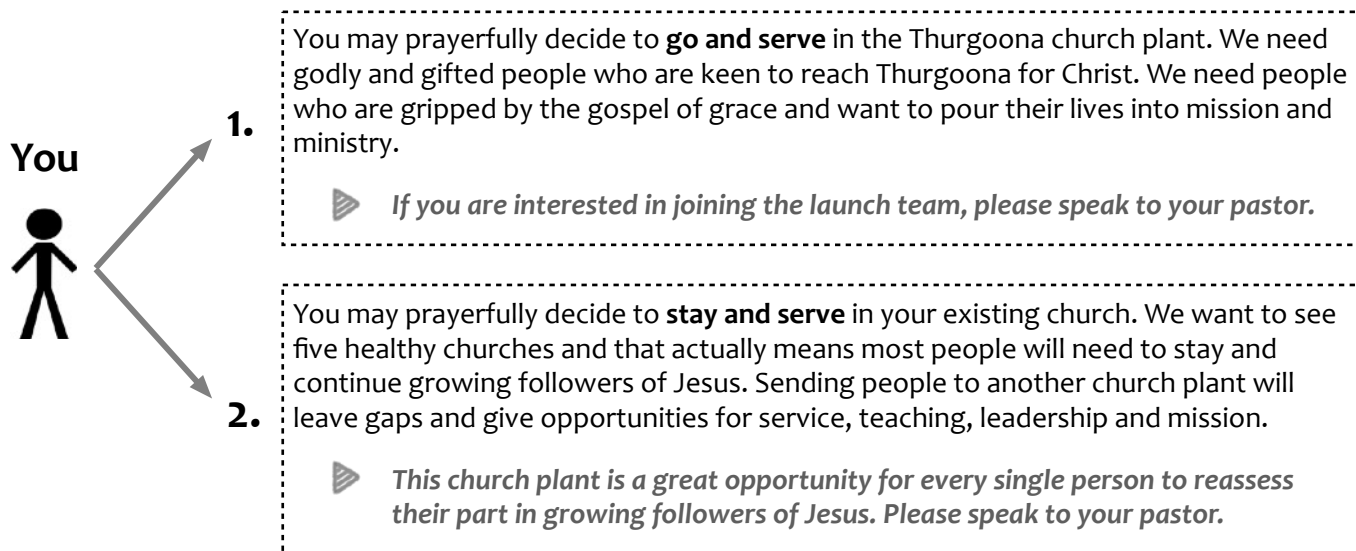
## Your part

No one likes change. It makes us tense and nervous. And the reality is that planting a church will involve a lot of change. Growth groups, ministry teams, churches will change. Relationships will change. But it's ok. It's completely normal to be unsettled by change. Even more than that, change is at the heart of growing followers of Jesus. We embrace change where appropriate, even when it's hard.

With so many people across our churches, the elders recognise that not everyone will agree with these changes, decisions and plans. The elders are keen to give everyone the permission and opportunity to raise their questions and uncertainty and disagreement.

▶ *Please feel free to organise a time to talk with an elder or pastor.*

In the end, the elders ask that you trust and support their leadership as we all work on this vision together. Planting a church in Thurgoona is our collective vision and it will impact us all. The elders therefore ask you to consider your part in this vision. There are two parts to play:



There are still lots of details to be worked out. We don't know who will form the launch team. We don't have a venue. We don't have a name.

But there are lots of things we do know. We know that Jesus is the king. We know that he lived, died and rose again. We know that he calls all people to follow him. We know that there is a desperate need for people to be saved from their sin and come into a life-giving relationship with Jesus. And we know that God graciously uses us, as weak as we are, to fulfil his plans and purposes in this world.

▶ *Please pray that God would grow his kingdom in this region, through us, for the glory of Jesus.*