

Anglican Parish of Toowong



Parish Profile 2025

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Toowong Parish Vision Statement and Parish Prayer

<i>Parish Vision Statement:</i>	<i>Parish Prayer:</i>
At Toowong, we are building an inclusive, Christ centred faith community that seeks truth, works for peace and justice, is generous, and non-judgemental.	Almighty and ever-living God, we ask for your guidance as we minister in the name of your Son. Be with us as we strive to be a faithful community that is loving, compassionate, generous and inclusive. May we always be faithful in our witness to the resurrection of Jesus, and like Thomas proclaim Him to be our Lord and God. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and God. Amen.

The Priest we are hoping for

The Rector of our Parish is retiring after 15 years, and we are seeking a new Priest-in-charge.

In 2024 Toowong Parish lost its Benefice status, and for financial reasons the parish changed to a part time ministry. For continuity, we are looking for a part time priest (hours open to negotiation) and this situation may be ideal for someone who has another part time ministry commitment and would be willing and able to also lead a small congregation in an inner-city Brisbane parish. There may be scope to return to a full time ministry if the parish's financial situation improves and our congregation increases.

Our Parish is looking for a new priest-in-charge who:

- Would care for the St Thomas' Toowong congregation, showing the love of God to his people on earth.
- Is passionate in serving and leading our parish to growth and has the ability to develop such strategies in accordance with Anglo-Catholic tradition and with the profile of present day Toowong.
- Will preach the gospel of Jesus in a way that inspires the congregation.
- Understands the need for energy, enthusiasm and an occasional sense of fun to spread the message of Jesus.
- Will continue to support our music ministry.
- Will visit parishioners in their homes, aged care facilities, or hospital.
- Will use technology to broaden the parish's reach, and further our ministry.
- Will lead an annual grant application process.
- Will provide support and guidance to members of the parish with differing viewpoints and will foster dialogue.
- Will be pastoral to all regardless of the priest's worldview. Our congregation may hold differing (even at times conflicting) worldviews, nevertheless all parishioners require pastoral support from our priest.
- Understands the need to continue to maintain the church and parish centre, recognising and encouraging the congregation to exercise their gifts to support the continuation of worship in our beautiful church.

What we can offer

- A Vision driven congregation.
- An active Liturgical team - two retired Honorary Licenced Permission to Officiate Priests (the Reverend Elsie Clack and the Reverend Alan Dale), two Liturgical Assistants, one Sacristan, an active three-member Altar Guild and a roster of readers for the Service readings.
- A committed Parish Council, Treasurer, two Church Wardens and four councillors who are keen to take areas of responsibility in support of the ministry of the parish.
- A committed musical team - three organists, a 15 person Choir led by a highly respected conductor.
- Volunteers who together care for the fabric and upkeep of the church and parish centre, tending and maintenance of the gardens, staffing the bookshop and preparing and performing music for services and for concerts. The parish undertakes several group activities, mostly outlined further in this document.
- As the parish does not own a house, it will provide the prescribed housing allowance.

Background Information

Toowong Parish

Toowong Parish is in the Diocese of Brisbane, or Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ). About four million people live within the Diocesan area, including more than 8,000 Anglicans in church each Sunday. In the ACSQ, there are over 175 active clergy in more than 130 parishes.

The suburb of Toowong is less than five kilometres south-west of the City of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. Toowong has a total land area of 3.9 km², and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that in June 2023 it had a population of 13,433 people. At 30 June 2023, the proportion of the estimated resident population aged 65 years and over for Toowong was 10.0%, with the median age being 30.2 years. By applying assumptions regarding future trends in the components of population change and the latest planning and development intelligence, the ABS projects that the population of Toowong will increase to 18,918 people by 2046 (an increase of 1.6%pa).

Toowong has six regulated early childhood education and care services, and Anglicare Southern Queensland owns and operates St John's Home for Men in Toowong. Home to 64 men, St John's provides specialised care and accommodation for men who have experienced homelessness, and who have complex behaviours and health issues. St John's promotes trauma-informed, person-centred care that is recovery-oriented. Gentlemen are encouraged to continue to engage positively in life and the community. On the second Thursday of each month at 10.30am the priest-in-charge of Toowong conducts a Eucharist at St John's Home for Men.

St Thomas' is situated near Brisbane Boys College (<https://www.bbc.qld.edu.au/>) a leading Queensland boys' school owned by the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (<https://pmsa-schools.edu.au/>) which runs a number of educational establishments from its base in Toowong. The Wesley Hospital, a Private Hospital with an Emergency Centre run by Uniting Care Qld is 1km away, and the University of Queensland is 3km from St Thomas'.

Location of the Church and other buildings

St Thomas' Anglican Church is situated on a prominent triangular site at the corner of High and Jephson Streets, Toowong and is a fine example of nineteenth century church architecture with an early English Gothic style. St Thomas' has a significant history due to its buildings and an Appendix covers this with reference to the Queensland Heritage Register and contains historic newspaper articles and photographs. The site comprises a brick church surrounded by established gardens and trees and containing early retaining walls, fences, gates and stairs.

The St Thomas' Parish Centre is next to the Church, connected by both a set of steps and a ramp. A car park owned by Data #3 is situated beneath the Parish Centre which includes seven car parking spaces exclusively for the church during the week, with access to all car spaces at the weekends. A lift connects the car park to both levels of the Parish Centre. The church has a number of rights of way through the car park, the lift and around the buildings.

The Congregation

Toowong Parish roll contains 70 entries, including 5 new entries in 2025. After being closed for Covid, typical weekly Eucharist attendance St Thomas' has reduced significantly. The majority of congregants are long-term worshippers and many are descendants of life-long parishioners of St Thomas'. However, we have some congregants who are new to St Thomas', and some from a number of ethnic backgrounds. In common with many Anglican congregations, the majority of the St Thomas' congregation is over seventy years of age. Estimates vary for the number of local people who if asked to name their church, mention St Thomas' Toowong, but it would be a considerable factor compared to the number of regular congregants.

Projected Income for the parish in 2025 is \$175,000 and but could be \$189,400 if we are able to rent out the Parish Centre. Toowong Parish has an overdraft facility and debt with ANFIN due to lift repairs and the current vacancy in the Parish Centre. We are fund-raising energetically to repay the debt, and we are actively seeking a new tenant in the Parish Centre. Grant applications are being written to assist with long-term maintenance of our Heritage church.

Worship

The style of worship in the Parish is in the Australian Anglo-Catholic tradition using *A Prayer Book for Australia* and hymns from *Together in Song*.

Worship times

- Sunday 8:30am Sung Eucharist. Parish Choir sings on the 1st Sunday of the month. On 5th Sundays, Eucharist is from 1st Order of the Holy Communion (APBA).
- Sunday 6:00pm Evening Prayer (BCP) – on hold at the moment.
- Friday 12:00pm – Said Eucharist with hymns (except public holidays)

Weekly attendance is around 25-50 communicants.

Seasonal Worship Times:

- **Patronal Festival** - As St Thomas the Apostle's Feast day is on the 3rd of July, we celebrate our Patronal Festival on the first Sunday of July each year with a Choral Sung Eucharist at 8.30am.
- **Ash Wednesday** – We hold a service at 6pm with the imposition of ashes.
- **Holy Week** – This includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday evening (foot washing), Good Friday (veneration of the cross), Holy Saturday.
- **Easter Sunday** Eucharist with the Parish Choir.
- **Dedication Festival** – at 8.30am on the first Sunday in October we celebrate the Dedication Festival of St Thomas the Apostle Church with the Parish Choir.
- **Teddy Bear Service** on a Sunday before Christmas so gifts of teddy bears can be delivered to the Children's Hospital.
- **Christmas Services** – 3pm Eucharist at St John's Home. 6:00pm Eucharist on Christmas Eve. 8:30am Eucharist on Christmas Day with Parish Choir.
- **Covenant Renewal Service** – 6pm on New Years Eve.

Morning Tea

Morning tea is available in the Parish Centre on the first, second and third Sundays



Notable ministries / Parish activities:

St Thomas' main ministries are Gardening, Men's Fellowship, Teddy Bear Ministry, Parish Book Shop and Music.

Gardening Group:

The St Thomas Anglican Church gardening group is a group of dedicated volunteers who have an interest in gardening and giving back to their community. The St Thomas Church Garden is set in a heritage listed site - incorporating native, succulent, floral, herb and citrus zones with numerous bench seats scattered through the grounds that invite anyone who is passing by to stop, pause and reflect on the beauty of nature. The garden group plays an important role in supporting members of the parish and the community to connect in an informal and supportive setting. As a result, new friendships continue to be developed through a shared interest in the environment, gardening and growing. As well as these activities, a program of sustainable gardening and planting is occurring throughout all zones within the heritage-listed site, which has resulted in numerous compliments from members of the community.

Activities planned for 2025 include memorial garden planning, good news garden project planning, scheduling of working bees and get togethers plus investigating BCC community composting hub and beekeeper in residence opportunities. We welcome anyone who is interested in meeting new people and working together as a collective to preserve this wonderful inner city green space in Toowong.



Open-door Sandwich Club:

We meet 12:00pm on the first Friday of each month in the Function Room / Book Shop for a time of fellowship. Open-door is a drop-in ministry for those who would like company and support.

Young Men's Fellowship Group:

On behalf of the parish, we hold an Anglican Christian fellowship group looking to provide outreach to young men. Of course, the nature of our events is very informal and is intended to be a relaxing and enjoyable experience. We look to extend an invitation to all young men out there.

The objective of our fellowship is to foster a supportive, respectful and non-judgemental environment where young men can get together and engage in healthy discussions, about all aspects of life.

Teddy Bear Ministry

A group of our ladies knit a teddy bear for each child that is Baptised.

A Teddy Bear Service is held each year where new Teddy Bears are collected for the Queensland Children's Hospital.

Men's Fellowship Group:

The Men's Fellowship Group meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6.30 pm to share a meal.

On the first Saturday of every month, the Men's Fellowship group hosts a Mr Perfect Free Community BBQs for Men at Anzac Park (100 Dean St, Toowong Q4066).

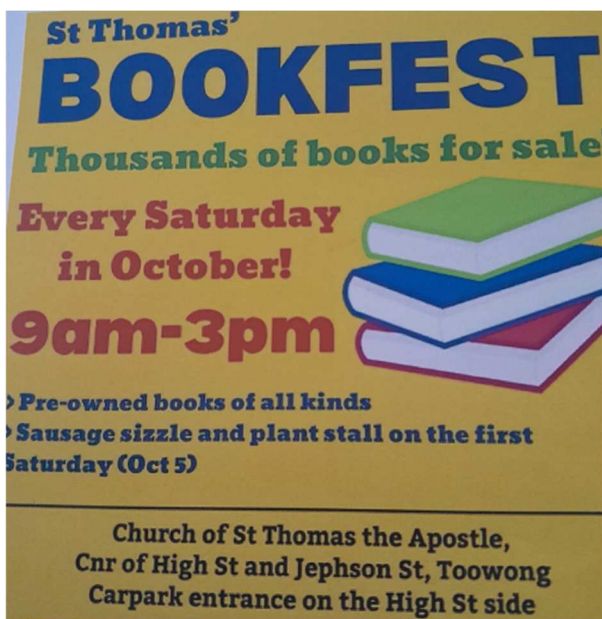


Parish Book Shop & Book Club

The Parish Book Shop is open each Thursday between 10.00am and 3.00pm in the Parish Centre.

The *Book Club* meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 10:30am.

Each October we host a BookFest complete with opportunities to buy cakes or plants, as organised by the congregation.



PAX

PAX Group met monthly for a decade until the end of 2024, and they hope to reform in 2026. PAX is an ecumenical group of people from all walks of life who meet once a month for a shared meal, enjoy a presentation and discussion about topical issues impacting on the best way of being a Christian in a modern world. PAX services included Café Church, Taize Services and the annual Transitus of St Francis.



Caring Ministries

Family Support Ministries: regular collection of clothing and other items to assist families with small children.

The *Percy Collin's Blanket Drive* is an annual collection of blankets for those who sleep rough and for families in need.

Street Pantry: a small pantry of non-perishable food is kept at the back of the church for those in need

Street Book Exchange: A book exchange box is available to all members of the community at the front of the Church.

Support for other agencies:

ABM used postage stamps; used spectacles for the *Lions Club*; book collection each year to be donated to schools in New Guinea through the *Rotary Club*, the collection of items in support of the *Mission to Seafarers*.

Music

The St Thomas' congregation enjoys great music throughout the year, not just for Sunday worship.

St Thomas' Parish Choir

The parish is proud to have a small but dedicated four-part Soprano-Alto-Tenor-Bass choir of around 15 people to enrich the music ministry at the Church. The Choir performs at the morning sung Eucharist on the first Sunday of each month. In addition to performing anthems, the Choir and leads the congregation in the singing of the communion setting, and in psalms, canticles and the hymns. The Choir also performs for special festivals and at Easter and Christmas.

Conductor

Neil Flottmann is well known as a professional musician in Brisbane and around Australia. Neil has been a parishioner since 1997, and since 2009 has brought to the choir the benefit of decades of professional experience with national orchestras and companies as an orchestral musician, chorus master and conductor.



Organists

The parish has three organists. **Beverley Taylor** has been the Principal Organist since her appointment in April 2006. Beverley has been a church organist for 60 years, as well as a chorister, choral conductor and accompanist on both piano and organ. Beverley's piano teacher was Florence Davey and when she became the accompanist of the Brisbane Eisteddfod Junior Choir she took lessons on the pipe organ from Nora Baird.



The parish is very fortunate to have such a talented organist for Sunday and special services such as Christmas, Easter and Hymnfests. For Beverley, she is thankful to God for a lifetime of music-making in which sacred music has been an avenue of service. Currently Beverley plays on the First and Fourth Sundays of the month.

Graham Hyde has been an organist since 1960 and was trained at Sydney Conservatorium of Music under Norman Johnston. He has been a Choirmaster and Organist in Anglican Churches in NSW and Queensland. Currently Graham plays on the third Sunday and shares the fifth Sunday with Dr Gillian McDonald.

Dr Gillian McDonald is a capable pianist and has played pipe organ for many years at the Toowong Anglican Churches. Currently Gillian plays in the second Sunday and shares the fifth Sunday with Graham Hyde.

Hymn Singing

Beverley has led organised Hymn singing so everyone can learn new hymns and join in with favourites, such as the well known Wesley Hymns. The event is usually held on a Sunday afternoon, and has been well attended.

Concerts

The congregation enjoys good music, and for this purpose St Thomas' holds concert events in the Church. We have some great local talent such as the "2nd Wind" Concert and Stage Bands, an a Capella group, individual instrumentalists, and of course our Parish Choir!

In 2024 there have been a number of concerts, for people to enjoy the talents of others and to help raise funds for the Church, so please enjoy the photos from our December 2024 concert below.





The future of the Parish

The Churchwardens and Parish Council consider that there are six primary areas for targeted growth in the future of the parish. These are:

- to continue to focus on our congregation, ensuring our worship is thought provoking, music beautiful and relevant, and maintain post service coffee and cake to foster fellowship.
- to improve our online presence, keeping our website and Facebook up to date, ensuring emails are delivered to parishioners, and widening the roster opportunities. We can build up our online resources to the glory of God.
- to make our church more welcoming for families with children.
- to formally follow through with families who reach out for pastoral services to encourage them to continue their faith journey at St Thomas'.
- To engage in outreach activities in our local community.
- To encourage further ecumenical co-operation with other Christian communities in the Toowong area, after the inroads made by the PAX Group.

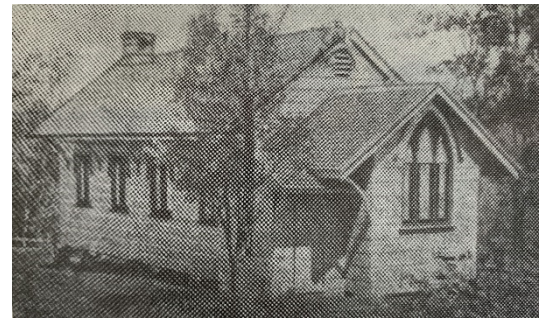


Appendix

History of St Thomas' Toowong

St Thomas' Church of England was constructed in 1877 replacing an 1865 timber building on another site at Curlew Street which was itself a part of the parish of All Saints' Church in Wickham Terrace. In 1870, St Thomas' became a parish, independent of All Saints'. The church was designed by parishioner and prominent Brisbane architect, F.D.G. Stanley, and has had two major additions. The first addition was in 1886 when the nave was extended, and the second addition was in 1947 when transepts and a chancel were added. The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Hale on 17 February 1877. The contractor was Henry Pierce and the building cost 850 pounds. An official opening ceremony in the form of a service was held on 13 October 1877 (see Appendix).

The southern, entrance end of the church addresses the corner of the two streets, where three substantial gate pillars with an iron palisade gate provide a principal entrance to the grounds of the church. Two sets of concrete stairs containing memorial gate posts and memorial plaques give access from the church grounds to the streets flanking the site.



St Thomas' at Curlew St



St Thomas' Toowong c.1917

Heritage listing

St Thomas' Anglican Church was listed on the [Queensland Heritage Register](#) on 21 October 1992 having satisfied the following criteria.

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history.

St Thomas' Church is important in demonstrating the pattern of growth of Toowong from an elite residential settlement in the 1860s to closer settlement following the introduction of the railway in the mid-1870s. As home to one of the earliest established Church of England parishes in Queensland, St Thomas' Church illustrates the development of the Church in the state.

The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.

The building is a fine example of nineteenth century church architecture, showing a strong influence of an Early English Gothic style, which informed most ecclesiastical buildings of the second half of the nineteenth century. Elements of St Thomas' which show this Gothic influence include the steeply pitched and dominant roofscape; the picturesque setting of the building; bi-chrome brickwork; lancet and pointed arched openings; gabled porches; cruciform plan; heavy internal roof trusses and stained and coloured glass.

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance.

St Thomas' Church has remarkable aesthetic value with strong landmark qualities; it is a well composed building picturesquely situated on a prominent site. The building has many well-crafted items of considerable aesthetic value including internal joinery, particularly the altar, pulpit, lectern and internal panelling; stained and coloured glass windows of William Bustard; font; various internal and external memorials and landscaping. The established plantings surrounding the church contribute to its picturesqueness and contain remnants of nineteenth and twentieth century garden design.

The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The church has a special association with the St Thomas' parish as their principal place of worship for about 120 years.

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history.

The building has associations with prominent Brisbane architect, FDG Stanley and with other early parishioners, many of whom were important in the early history of the Church of England in Queensland.

Being included on the Queensland Heritage Register give St Thomas' Toowong the opportunity to apply for Queensland Heritage grants.

Books written about St Thomas' Toowong are available in the State Library of Queensland and include:

Gregory, Helen; Henricksen, Noel (2007), *A church for its times : the story of the church of St Thomas the apostle, Toowong*, Anglican Parish of Toowong, [ISBN 978-0-646-47589-9](https://www.scribd.com/document/475899/ISBN-978-0-646-47589-9)

St Thomas' Church Toowong diamond jubilee 1870 – 1930.



Past Rectors

RECTORS TIMELINE – ST THOMAS' - TOOWONG

19 th Century	REV'D THOMAS JONES Curlew Street 1855-1870	REV'D ROBERT CREYKE Curlew Street 1870-1874	REV'D BENJAMIN GLENNIE 67 High Street 1876-1877	REV'D ROBERT CLOSE 1877-1878	REV ROBERT CREYKE (Recalled) 1878-1881	REV CHARLES WILLIAM Houlbrook 1881-1888
	REV'D EDWARD LISTER SALISBURY 1888-1890	REV'D VINOY ROBSON HANDYSIDE 1890-1896	REV'D GEORGE HORSFALL FRODSHAM 1896-1902			
20 th Century	REV'D JOHN BRODIE ARMSTRONG 1902-1907	REV'D PERCY PLEYDELL NOTT 1908-1913	REV'D WALTER SCOTT 1913-1919	CANON NORMAN OSBORN 1919-1925	CANON JOHN ALFRED CUE 1925-1929	REV'D HERBERT DOUGLAS CAMPBELL 1929-1935
	REV'D SAMUEL ATHERTON Aug 1935-1947	CANON ALBERT EDWARD LOXTON M.A. 1947-1965	ARCHDEACON WALTER BRYAN WARD 1966-1975	REV'D WILLIAM JAMES MUNRO WARNER 1975-1982	REV'D NEVILLE THULBORN 1982-1989	REV'D COLIN CUSSEN 1989-2001
21 st Century	REV'D CANON DR MARIAN FREE 2001-2008	REV'D PAUL DUNN (Locum) 15 Aug 2008- 19 Apr 2009	REV'D THOMAS EDWARD SULLIVAN 24 Apr 2009 - Current			

St Thomas' Parish Centre, and its predecessors

In the early 1960s, a new low set brick rectory was constructed adjacent to the church, and this and the nineteenth century Sunday School and Parish Hall survived to the north of the church, although a fire in May 1970 gutted the school. By the 1980s, the upkeep on the rectory, Sunday school and hall (used for both church and community functions) was becoming too expensive, but equally the church could not afford to replace these buildings. In 1987, a commercial developer proposed to buy the land occupied by the rectory, Sunday school and hall and construct a large commercial building with the church having use of part of the building for its purposes with an off-site rectory (High Street having become too noisy and commercial). This was a controversial proposal within the congregation, but it was agreed to proceed, but the overall development was cancelled due to the downturn in the property market. However, the concept remained alive within the congregation and a similar commercial development arrangement was completed in 1998 with a parish centre established as part of a larger commercial building.



Figure 1: St Thomas Parish Hall c. 1940

St Thomas' has a modern Parish Centre with facilities where we meet after our services for morning tea. The lower half of the Parish Centre is used by the parish for the Rector and bookshop. The upper half of the Parish Centre is offered for rent at January 2025.



Car parking for the Church and Parish Centre is located under the Data #3 building. For those attending Sunday morning service at St Thomas' Church, car parking is available from 7.00am until 10.30am every Sunday ONLY.

St Thomas' Pipe Organ & piano

The original organ was built by B B Whitehouse in 1886, and enlarged in 1948 by Whitehouse Bros. Brisbane.

The current pipe organ was rebuilt and enlarged in 1962 by H W Jarrott Brisbane and has 2 manuals, pedal Board, 11 speaking ranks of pipes and electric action. Major cleaning and slide tuning was carried out by Doug Milne (tuning and maintenance) and Graham Hyde (Assistant Organist) in January 2019.

The organ is well maintained and tuned by Doug Milne (tuning and maintenance) assisted by Graham Hyde.

In 2011 St Thomas' Church benefited from a generous donation from Brad White and Tiffany Xavier of their well loved Broadwood & Sons **piano**. The piano now sits alongside the organ and is enjoyed by many during services and concerts.

Article from the Brisbane Courier 18 February 1877

Source:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/169511502#>

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF TOOWONG CHURCH.

About a hundred and sixty people were met together at the site of the new St. Thomas' Church, Toowong, on Saturday afternoon, for the purpose of witnessing the very interesting ceremony of laying the first stone of the edifice. The site is within a very few minutes walk of the railway station, on pretty rising ground embracing a good view of the river and surrounding country. The plans of the church itself, which have been prepared by Mr. Stanley, the Colonial architect, are so arranged that the building, while at first only suited to present requirements, will be capable of being enlarged to at least three times its present dimensions. Mr. Pierce is the contractor for the work of which the foundations are already well advanced. About half past three the Bishop, accompanied by the Ven. Archdeacon Glennie, and the Revs. T. Jones, Creyke, Zillman, Love, and Butterell, approached the place of the ceremony, the choir singing a processional hymn—"Onward, Christian Soldiers." The service was then read by the Bishop and Archdeacon Glennie, the lesson being taken from 1 Chronicles, chap. xxix., 19—20 verses, and the Psalms being the 84 and the 122, and sung by the choir. His Lordship having prepared the cement with a handsome silver trowel, the stone was lowered into its place—covering a cavity, in which was a bottle, containing the daily journals and a statement connected with the establishment of the church. Having struck the stone with a handsome little mallet, this part of the ceremony was concluded, and the choir sang the hymn, "Christ is made the sure foundation." The Bishop then made a short address, in which he said that an occasion like that at which he was assisting was always one that gave him very great happiness, as proving that some progress was being made in the building of God's Temples. He hoped his audience would pray earnestly for the success of the good work. His Lordship then invited those present to lay their offerings on the stone, himself setting the example with a very handsome one. As soon as the last offering had been received the Bishop gave the blessing, and the company dispersed. The ceremony was most successfully carried out from beginning to end, and reflected great credit on those who had its management. Mr. W. H. Wilson's services at the harmonium were highly appreciated. The choir, the members of which had but a very short time in which to prepare, acquitted themselves really admirably. The donations amounted to £24, and would have reached a higher figure, but for the Bishop having, through a misunderstanding, dismissed the people before the supplementary collection was concluded. The silver trowel and the mallet used on the occasion bore the inscription:—"Presented to the Right Rev. Bishop Hale, at the laying of the foundation stone of St. Thomas' Church, Toowong, February 17, 1877." Both trowel and mallet were manufactured and presented by Mr. Snow, the silversmith, of Queen-street.