



Ministry in the Isa

Simon Hattrell

I have been in the Isa for over a year now, as Rector of St James the Great Anglican Church.

Having spent the last 16 years in Theological Education and pastoral Ministry in Hobart and the Huon Valley, Western Queensland is a huge change! However, it is like coming full circle as one of my first jobs on arriving from the UK in 1968 was in an open cut iron ore mine on the West Coast of Tassie at Savage River. I met my wife Barbara there, who was on her first teaching appointment. We had two more spells at Savage after missionary service in France and our daughter was born there in 1975.



I find it easy to relate to blokes doing 12 hour shifts and just the general culture of a mining town, although Mount Isa is unique. I have often described it as "Suburbia in the Bush"! There are lots of kids and every time you go to the supermarket, it is easy to strike up a conversation with young parents. There are a number of Christian churches in town, and all the churches have good co-operation. Each Easter we have an annual Good Friday service up at the Cross of Witness on a hill which overlooks the town and the mine workings. The cross was erected 50 years ago by a predecessor at my church - the Reverend Archie Briggs, a past missionary to China. This combined service is a great testimony to the town and its people.

With a transient population, it is a challenge to build up a congregation which can remain self sustaining. I also spend some time in other communities in the West and recently had a wonderful opportunity to minister to the whole workforce at Cannington Mine as I lead a memorial service for a miner tragically killed in an accident. It was good to share what the scriptures say about the hope we can have as believers in our risen Lord Jesus Christ. The CEO of the contracting company who asked me to take the service on behalf of the family and his workmates wrote and said *"Simon, I'd like to say a big "thank you" to you for the wonderful service you put together and performed at Cannington on Friday for Mick. Even the hardened miners felt it was perfect"*. It is a privilege to serve these people!

