

On Track



Welcoming PIM's new National Director



The Presbyterian Inland Mission is pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev Ian Schoonwater as its new National Director.

With a deep commitment to the gospel and extensive experience in parish ministry and chaplaincy, Rev Schoonwater brings renewed vision and energy to the PIM as it continues its vital work of proclaiming Christ and making disciples across regional and remote Australia.

PIM asked Ian a range of questions to get to know him better and understand his vision for the future of the PIM:

Tell us about the ministry you were involved in before accepting the National Director's position with PIM.

Most recently, I served as one of the Senior Chaplains with the NSW Police Force. My job involved recruiting, training and supporting chaplains across the state. I also provided pastoral care directly to police officers and their families.

Before that, I was the Senior Chaplain of Jericho Road, worked in hospitals as chaplain, and as a parish minister in Gulgong and Grafton.

I'm married to Narelle, and we have two adult sons.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities and challenges facing gospel work in inland and remote Australia today?

The history and legacy of PIM since 1912, taking the gospel out and providing practical pastoral care, remains unchanged. The tyranny of distance is still real, and it's not only physical distance: communities continue to face shrinking services, church closures, and declining connection. This has seen a rise in despair for many communities.

PIM is needed more than ever. The need for the gospel to go out is constant. As a mission, we must keep working to reach these communities for Christ and respond to the changing landscape.

What role do local churches and supporters play in the future growth and effectiveness of PIM? How can they best partner with us?

PIM doesn't exist in isolation. Our mission depends on partnership with churches and supporters across Australia.

There is a significant cost involved in keeping our patrols running, so financial support remains essential. We also want to partner with individuals through our Gospel Nomad program, training people to serve as 'missionaries' to the interior. City churches can support remote congregations by assisting with outreach into their communities.

Most importantly, we ask you to partner with us in prayer. Pray for the committee as they work to proclaim Christ, for our patrols as they travel vast distances, and for me as I begin leading the team.

Four years of reflection

Before joining the PIM, Noah Vasiliades worked as an arborist across Eastern Victoria. Four years ago, he swapped chainsaws and climbing gear for the work of remote gospel ministry in the High Country. Recently PIM sat down with Noah to ask him what lessons those four years have taught him.

First is the enormity of the task. Even in a small community and a sparsely populated region, the needs are vast. "There is so much to do," Noah says. "The scope of work is phenomenal, and it's certainly beyond my ability to cover it all. One person cannot reach every property, every family, every crisis, but Nerroli and I are thankful to do what we can".

Second, the vital importance of consistency. Trust is not built overnight. It takes years of steady presence for people to keep on opening their lives. In a small town everyone is watching. Noah says "it's so important to live that consistent, godly life, because in these communities it is not just what you say, it will be how you live what you say".

Third, how much can be accomplished through prayer. "I know this shouldn't be third," Noah laughs, "but God has opened so many doors after I've prayed." He admits he has sometimes tried to force opportunities or push his own agenda, only to see those efforts fail. Prayer remains the lesson that he keeps relearning: when he prays, things happen.



Fourth, how helpful PIM's support is. Now that he understands the unique pressures of this ministry, Noah is deeply thankful to the PIM for the support he has. He spoke about PIM investing in his theological training, appointing an experienced pastor for regular (online) discipling, and providing pastoral care for his wife and family. "They have been amazing," he says, "PIM is right there to help and support me in every way."

Finally, even his background as an arborist has brought unexpected blessing. The practical skills Noah once used among trees he now uses to serve people. "It's good to serve in practical ways," he says, "and not only with words". "I never dreamed my past profession would enhance ministry like this," Noah reflects. "God can use any background."

Noah's story remains an encouragement. Even though the remote mission field is large, the reality is that prayer opens doors, there are endless gospel opportunities, and no previous experience is wasted when placed in the Lord's hands.

Current events

Prayer and mission partnership with the PTC

Staff and students at the Presbyterian Theological College (PTC) in Victoria recently heard a mission update on the work and ministry of PIM, including specific opportunities for prayer.

Committee member Martin de Pyle Jnr provided an overview of PIM's current ministries and the opportunities for gospel-centred service across rural and remote Australia. He highlighted PIM's strategic role in advancing the Great Commission throughout regional Australia and encouraged the PTC community to continue praying faithfully for this work.

Sincere thanks was also expressed to the John Paton Fellowship for its prayerful and practical support of the Snowy Mountain Patrol. Noah Vasiliades, a current PTC student and member of the college community, is grateful for their ongoing prayers and support.



Gospel Nomads across the nation



The 2026 Gospel Nomads Network has several exciting events coming up in the next few months, and it's not too late to join. Whether you're travelling Australia or simply want to connect with like-minded travellers, Gospel Nomads is a place to share stories from the road, encourage one another and grow in faith and understanding as you seek to proclaim the Gospel on the road.

Reconnect Week at New Dunesk 29 September - 2 October 2026

Nomads will reconnect at New Dunesk to renew friendships, grow in faith, and serve together. This year there will be opportunity to meet and hear from Snowy Mountains Patrol workers Noah and Neroli Vasiliades, alongside a program of Bible teaching and presentations.

Participants will also have the opportunity to help PIM prepare for the Tracks Outback Concert. Working together behind the scenes is a practical way to serve the ministry and help make this significant outreach event a memorable success for all who attend.

WA Gospel Nomads in Albany 13-16 October 2026

If you're travelling through Western Australia or call the West home, this new Gospel Nomads event is designed to equip, encourage, and connect Christian travellers who are passionate about sharing Christ wherever the road leads.

Participants will receive practical teaching in evangelism, discipleship and mission from Ben Wingard, alongside PIM Convener David Hawken and experienced Gospel Nomads Bob and Jenny Allan. There will also be ample time for fellowship, prayer and exploring Albany and surrounds.

This free gathering is self-catered and self-accommodated, with a welcome barbecue and farewell commissioning. It's a great opportunity to grow in ministry, build friendships and discover new ways to serve while travelling.

If you are interested in joining the Gospel Nomads and attending either of these events, email gospelnomads@pim.org.au or call 0438 868 964.

Tracks

Outback Concert

2-5 October
2026

New Dunesk,
Ardlethan NSW

**TICKETS
SELLING
FAST!**

\$85pp, kids FREE!

Includes free camping
onsite all weekend.

**[pim.org.au
/event/tracks](http://pim.org.au/event/tracks)**

Featuring

**Sons of
Korah**

**Zoë Tyne
MountainKind
Anna Waters
Ben Price**

Camping • Bushwalks
Barista coffee • Campfires
Kids activities
Plus so much more!

Interested in donating to the work of the Presbyterian Inland Mission?

Please fill in and mail back to us the separate donation slip included with this issue, or visit www.pim.org.au to donate electronically.

Get On Track delivered straight to your inbox

Subscribe to our mailing list to receive your next edition of On Track, plus other news, stories and prayer points, straight to your email inbox.

Visit pim.org.au/subscribe

Thank you for your support

Convener's message

From the Convener

The Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee has enjoyed a productive and encouraging season as we continue to oversee and support the ministry across Australia.

While much of this work takes place behind the scenes, it is vital to ensuring that PIM remains well equipped to proclaim Christ and serve people living in the remote and sparsely populated areas of Australia.

One recent highlight was the working bee at New Dunesk, where volunteers including some Gospel Nomads, generously gave their time and practical skills to maintain and improve the facilities. These efforts help ensure that New Dunesk remains a welcoming base for ministry, training, and fellowship and is well prepared for our next Tracks outback concert in October.

The Committee has continued to meet regularly to provide governance, make strategic decisions, and pray together for the ongoing work of the Mission. Alongside these meetings, committee members have maintained close contact with PIM staff as they faithfully carry out ministry in diverse locations around the country.

A significant focus in recent months has been the recruitment of a new National Director. This important appointment will help shape the future direction of the PIM, and the Committee has devoted considerable time and prayer to seeking the person whom God is calling to this role. Please pray for Ian Schoonwater as he takes on this important role.

Preparations are also well underway for the upcoming General Assembly of Australia. The PIM report has been prepared and it should ensure the Assembly is well informed about the current state of and opportunities for PIM. We look forward to sharing how God continues to work through PIM and to working with the Assembly to further the gospel to the inland.

As the General Assembly of Australia approaches in September, we also encourage God's people to pray for the election of new Committee members. In particular, we ask for prayer that the Lord would raise up faithful and gifted representatives from Western Australia, South Australia, and Tasmania who will provide wise leadership and contribute to the ongoing growth and effectiveness of Presbyterian Inland Mission.

We thank God for His continued faithfulness and remain grateful for the prayers, generosity, and partnership of supporters across the country as together we seek to take the gospel to inland Australia.

Rev David Hawken
Convener

PRIVACY: PIM values the privacy of the people we work with, therefore, we may at times change the names of people in stories, substitute photos or obscure some geographic details that might identify them. However, all the stories we tell are true and accurately convey what we see God doing in people's lives.

PO Box 9, Ardlethan NSW 2665
☎ 0438 868 964 ✉ admin@pim.org.au
📘 @PresbyterianInlandMission
www.pim.org.au



— worth driving for —