

Introduction

In the Name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, I welcome you to Synod.

I begin by acknowledging the traditional Custodians of the land and country upon which we meet and in so doing honour the Elders – past and present.

Many of you are here for the first time; I trust and pray that the experience will be a heartening one for you. Thank you for being willing to serve your local communities and agencies in this way.

In 2009, I shared my dream for *a diocese where the love of Jesus transforms individuals and communities*.

That dream was informed and shaped by the following Guiding Principles:

- prayer is essential
- reading, teaching and living in response to the Scriptures is a first order priority
- Word and Sacrament are the basis of our worship
- valuing different worship styles and learning from each another
- building relationships with all people
- growing disciples by sharing the Gospel with friends and neighbours
- baptising and nurturing new believers in order to transform God's world
- alleviating human need and addressing injustice through advocacy, peace-building, reconciliation and loving service
- safeguarding the integrity of creation
- practicing governance that is effective and transparent
- building partnerships with other ministry agencies, Christian churches and associations.

Is that dream, predicated on these Guiding Principles, still relevant? How is it being realised?

Reflection

Paul understood the challenge involved when God's people seek to turn God's dream into reality.

9 For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them... 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that I might by all means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings. 24 Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. 25 Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we have an imperishable one. 26 So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; 27 but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9.9; 22-27 NRSV)

Paul is prepared to do all he can to help people see, know, and follow Jesus. He runs the race, giving all he has to the endeavour. Paul will not rest.

His passion is that the world might share in the gift and mission of our Lord Jesus.

Paul is acutely aware of how easy it is for dreams to get lost in the storms and trials of life. Our hearts and minds readily drift in different directions. Disputes around wisdom, spiritual gifts and doctrine emerge all too readily, while conflicts over wealth and social status undermine the capacity of Christ's body to make faith, hope and love real to the world.

Over and over again, Paul reinforces the truth that God's mission, begun in Christ, can only ever be realised by Christians working together because of the grace of Christ.

Has the love of God so changed us that we might look at the world with God's heart and yearn for transformation? How will 'some be saved' when our strength, talent and resources are so limited?

The people who call our small settlements, towns, cities and suburbs home are acquainted with disorder and conflict. They are often distracted, disillusioned, disinterested - putting their confidence in anything other than Christ.

Many feel powerless watching events careen from hopeless to tragic in places like Gaza, Syria and Iraq.

Many feel disillusioned as the Federal Government rightly pursues institutions for their historical indifference to child abuse whilst at the same time *appearing* less than cognisant of the damage that mandatory offshore detention does to asylum seekers – especially to little ones, which one chief immigration psychiatrist has likened to tortureⁱ and others to abuse.ⁱⁱ

Many feel overwhelmed as unemployment and underemployment grows once again, especially among young adults,ⁱⁱⁱ yet scores of programs designed to help people who have disengaged from school due to health, bullying, homelessness and other risk factors are delayed or wound back.^{iv}

Despite the attention given to matters of disability and mental illness, vulnerable people and their families continue in cycles of poverty and distress.^v

Many wonder at the future we're creating as the infrastructure designed to shift our economic dependence on carbon is being dismantled while ever-larger coal mines and terminals are being mooted, even though pundits warn that such enterprises are apt to have a deleterious impact on climate and environment.^{vi}

Such scenes may unseat our confidence - or challenge our worldview and lead us to (rightly) ponder, what *are* God's purposes in all this? What kind of future will Christianity have when the impact of the Church appears to be limited, if not weak?

Given this 'canvas', I believe our diocesan dream is more important than ever, but our challenge is this: How might we continue in making it a reality? Are we fit and motivated? Are we prepared to do all we can together, as Paul would say, so that some might be saved?

Focus

In order to realise the Bishop's dream, we focussed on nine areas of activity:

- encouraging missional engagement
- raising a new generation of disciples and leaders
- responding to human need through care and advocacy
- equipping God's people for ministry and mission
- connecting church and world
- inspiring and nurturing a culture of worship and mission
- promoting and practicing environmental stewardship
- ensuring transparency and effective governance
- encouraging healthy communities confident in Christ.

These foci require us to be sure in our vocation and calling, to be disciplined in the development of skills and talents, and to be diligent by not giving up when we fall short.

It is through prayer and measured risk taking that we discern what works and where we need to start over.

Let me survey how each one (presented in a slightly different order) is helping us turn the dream into reality.

1. Missional Engagement

Our 150th Anniversary celebrations coincided with many other significant anniversaries across south eastern New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory – including Canberra's 100th, Moruya's 150th, Braidwood's 170th, and Goulburn's, Yass/Boorowa's and Queanbeyan's 175.th

These celebrations afforded our parishes a splendid opportunity to reflect on how they have brought hope and transformation for more than 15 decades – so that some might be saved.

Three events to reference:

First, *the distribution of our commemorative New Testaments*. We suggested that every parishioner should pray for three people and give them a New Testament in the course of the year.

Well, we gave away 20,000 of those beautifully produced volumes. They ended up in schools, prisons, hospitals and homes. My friend Claire Ayling made business trips to isolated parts of Indonesia giving copies to her hosts and their friends.

I was especially grateful to a team from St. Marks's National Theological Centre who distributed around 2,000 to Goulburn residents during a recent mission.

I warmly commend the Reverend Guy Matthews who coordinated this project overall.

Second, the *Bishop's Walk of the Cross*. During Lent last year and again this year I had the rare privilege of connecting with hundreds of people, both churched and unchurched, in this rural headline-capturing exercise.

In small gatherings through to large public meetings, local communities of faith prayerfully, creatively and courageously shone for Jesus.

In Bigga, a small centre in the parish of Binda, the local authorities closed the road in and out of town so that I, along with all the children from the local primary school, could walk down the main street with the children carrying the cross - albeit like an aeroplane - to a reception at the school.

I gave a short gospel message, handed out loads of New Testaments, and was invited to present academic and swimming awards. It was wonderful. The Reverend Rick Lewis, Gwenda and their parishioners rose – breathtakingly – to the occasion.

Similarly, it was a great pleasure to share in this saving work with the parishes of Temora, Junee, Cootamundra, Gunning, Harden-Murrumburrah, Yass, Crookwell and Goulburn. I am so grateful to the many church leaders and parishioners for their careful and prayerful preparation, warm welcome, and enthusiasm for the gospel. Coordination was done with much grace by Canon Gill Varcoe.

While the cross-carrying bit may appear a tad idiosyncratic, nonetheless it opens up opportunities for conversation. When asked why I do this, my consistent reply is twofold.

To begin with, I believe communities need to see their leaders, especially bishops, engaging in public evangelism and giving people the opportunity to turn to Christ. Do you know one fellow, as he came forward to give his life to Christ, said, “Bishop, I’ve been waiting for an opportunity to do this for 40 years...”

Another reason is this: it provides opportunities – and a model, for any person of faith to share what Jesus has done for them - whether in parks, nursing homes, clubs, classrooms, fire-trucks or fishing wharves – and to gently but confidently, invite a response.

You will be pleased to know that an encouraging number of people recommitted, or gave their lives to Christ during, or because of, the walk. That is the love of Jesus transforming people and communities!

Third, *Connect to Church Sunday*. This event, on reflection, has enjoyed only modest support and I wonder if enthusiasm for what was ‘Back to Church Sunday’ has waned. Are we connecting with people in the course of our daily routines and activities, doing already what ‘Connect’ seeks to accomplish?

‘Connect to Church’ is not about the numbers but cultural change. In preparing for the event, our members have the opportunity to become more confident and comfortable inviting their neighbours to church. It also helps parishes to assess their hospitality. While there is not a parish in the diocese that would not claim to be friendly, how many of our services and activities genuinely take into account the needs of first-timers? Here is my suggestion: may we revisit this initiative once more during Advent? I look forward to your feedback.

2. Raising a New Generation of Leaders

We have made good progress and here are three examples for your encouragement.

First, *Synergy Youth and Children*. I am grateful to the Board of Synergy Youth, chaired by Dr Ruth Edwards with Mr Andrew Edwards (no relation) our new Director. Andrew enthusiastically oversees a team that influences the lives of hundreds of girls, boys and young leaders.

Andrew has recently taken over the Bishop’s Gap Year program and this year we have four outstanding participants. At a recent event, two of these young

adults shared how they had come to faith or renewed their commitment during the Bishop's Walk with the Cross visit to Camp Pelican.

Second, *Diocesan Schools*. Our diocese is committed to investing in young leaders through our schools' ministry. Our newest school in Googong will accept its first students in 2015 and the Principal, Mr. Ian Hewitt, is engaged fully with the start-up.

The contribution by our Diocesan Schools Council has been valued and I do acknowledge the foundational work undertaken by erstwhile Director, Mr. Graham Willard. Graham elected to complete his term of office last month. We do wish him God's every blessing for life and ministry.

The principals, councils, staff and chaplains of all our schools are to be warmly commended for their desire to see God's kingdom advanced through Christ-centred Anglican education – *as are* the volunteers, SRE leaders and Christian teachers who shine for Jesus in our State and Territory schools. In many, if not most cases, their witness to Christ is the only connection students have with the people of God.

Nevertheless our schools face many very real challenges. Schools in Canberra may have wonderful facilities and healthy waiting lists, but increasingly they are challenged by a pervasive indifference to the Gospel. For our chaplains, this means constantly demonstrating how Christianity contributes to the common good against a background of suspicion towards religion generally.

Our regional schools face this and other challenges. While seeking to provide a faithful Christian witness to their community, they are challenged by operating in a context where demand is modest.

To this end, I want to be clear: there is more work to be done in securing the longer-term sustainability of our schools on the coast. As a Diocese, we have acted swiftly to ensure the sustainability of all our schools. When concerns arose in relation to sustainability of the schools in Bega and Moruya, we provided a Schools' Special Assistance Package that involved a \$3.2M capital injection and the South Coast Anglican Schools Diocesan Accountability Ordinance.

New leaders have been engaged, Christian ministry is front and centre, new links between the schools and local parishes are growing and their financial

health is improving. A closer and continuing working partnership between the school councils and the central agencies of the Diocese is in place. I hope you'll extend a warm welcome to Principals, Mr. Stephen Babbage and Mr. Andrew Duchesne and Chair Mr. John Oates in the course of this Synod.

Third, the *Anglican Tertiary Ministry*. We are blessed to have entrepreneurial and faithful leaders who are prepared to explore new ministry possibilities. The honorary pioneering ministry of the Reverend Owen Davies and his wife, Hazel (being ordained deacon in February) across the University of Canberra campus deserves mention. Owen's goal is to establish an Anglican campus congregation. His work in one to one counselling, training and serving a multi-faith chaplaincy setting is making this goal a reality.

Under the leadership of Archdeacon Matt Brain, we are developing an 'Exploratory Ministry Chaplaincy Unit' that will support and encourage these new ministries. The Reverend Brad Lovegrove has worked diligently with Synergy to develop a Tertiary Ministries framework across three campuses; it is operational and bearing fruit. I am most grateful to God for Brad's input and fellowship. Although Brad's term has ended, Archdeacon Matt will keep things moving.

3. Equipping for Ministry and Mission

I am encouraged – almost daily – to hear accounts of how people in parishes are being resourced and equipped by our clergy and lay leaders to exercise their vocation as Christ's ambassadors in the world.

A fillip for such activity is the *Diocesan Lay Centre for Ministry and Mission*. Archdeacon John Barnes, Mrs. Margaret Wheelwright and their teams are at the forefront of designing courses and activities that facilitate parish ministry, especially in our rural situations. Archdeacon John brings all his skills as our former Mission Facilitator to this role. The Centre now has dedicated premises in Goulburn.

The Centre – on my behalf – has ably run the Bishop's Cathedral Convention, which saw more than 450 people attend our inaugural gathering in January. In May, the Centre hosted the 'Missional Paradigms' gathering with Dr. Martin Robinson and the Reverend Paul Griffiths from the UK.

In May 2015, the Centre will once again present the Bishop's Cathedral Convention where our guest will be the Reverend Dr. Alison Morgan, a distinguished author, theologian and practitioner from the UK. One of Alison's many areas of expertise is mobilising individuals and congregations for mission.

St. Mark's National Theological Centre plays a vital role in equipping our people for ministry and mission. The newly refurbished and expanded library is a fine achievement and I am grateful to its former Director, Dr. Tom Frame, the staff, students and generous friends who made this particular dream a reality.

In July, we welcomed the new Director of St. Mark's, the Reverend Dr. Andrew Cameron. Andrew's ministry has begun in earnest and I look forward to hearing him share with us in this Synod.

Thanks to St. Mark's Council and its President, Bishop Trevor Edwards, for their prayerfulness and patience in Andrew's appointment. Bishop Trevor is also the Director of Ministry Training and Development.

You will be pleased to know that a fine cohort of gifted and able leaders are preparing for ordination in November and February. Bishop Trevor further advises that he is working with an additional 26 ordination enquirers!

This ministry is enhanced by our partnership with Charles Sturt University and our parallel relationship the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture – that by God's very good grace is now led by my colleague, Assistant Bishop Stephen Pickard. The appointment of the Reverend Dr. Scott Cowdell, our Canon Theologian, as Research Professor is a testimony to the esteem and significance of his work.

Let me also publicly acknowledge the foundational work of St. Mark's competency based training that was overseen by the Right Reverend David Robinson. Bishop David was consecrated in Rockhampton last week. He and Jan have been wonderful ambassadors for our diocese both locally and abroad; we wish them God's every blessing for this new chapter of life and ministry.

As a sidebar – but on the C & G exporting Bishops theme (!), it was a joy and privilege to be the Chief Consecrator for Dr. Sarah Macneil in Grafton earlier this year. Bishop Sarah was well supported by friends from this place and we pray God's blessing for her life and Ian's and witness.

A less obvious – but very effective equipping tool(s) are our diocesan newspaper and website. Editor, Lew Hitchick has served us well, producing the *Anglican News* on a monthly and bi-monthly basis. We're reviewing our news delivery format and Lew's input will be invaluable in this process.

The Reverend Wayne Brighton has done a marvellous work developing our website. Editing news items and reporting how you are engaging in mission has really made a difference. The web is a powerful medium and globally, thousands of people visit our site. Thank you, Wayne and all those who contribute their articles and ideas.

4. Inspiring a Culture of Worship and Mission

Last year, I outlined three challenges: be a pioneer, be local, be inspired – and in the process...try at least one new thing at church. Well, I know many of you have embraced that challenge. I am so grateful.

In Goulburn, a lady, to whom I'll refer as 'Mary', took up the challenge after attending an 'F5' Friendship course and the Alpha Training track (presented by Canon Margaret Campbell) at our Cathedral Convention. Mary felt called of God to pray for the people in the public housing complex across the road from her very modest rented accommodation. She began to greet them as they passed by her gate and then she hit on a great 'outreach' idea. Mary started a vegetable patch.

The preparation and planting led to conversations as neighbours asked what she was doing – and when it came time for the 'harvest' – dear Mary began to share her bounty with her new acquaintances; free vegies for all!

Some she asked in for a cup of tea and they returned the favour. When they began to swap and share life stories, Mary quite naturally spoke about her trust in the Lord Jesus. You can imagine how delighted she was when some of the people asked her to pray for them.

Mary has now begun – for these new acquaintances - an Alpha course that meets in her little rented cottage. I believe half a dozen people are attending.

That, beloved, is how the love of Jesus transforms individuals and communities! I should add that Mary, keen to hone her skills, has started a

distance education diploma course from St. Mark's and has brought some of her new friends to church. Not a bad effort because Mary is in her 70s.

Our 'mother church', St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn, is another centrepiece in creating a culture of worship and mission. We are grateful to the Dean and his staff for their facilitation of Synod services and activities and our Ordination events.

The Cathedral hosted a number of 150th Celebration events for the Diocese and for the City of Goulburn including the Civic Celebration, the extraordinary 'rose window' quilt, and the commemoration of Bishop Mesac's arrival that included a street procession and service of Evening Prayer.

These events are enhanced and supported by our enthusiastic and hard working Anglican Historical Society and the Friends of the Cathedral – who coordinated, marketed and distributed the bespoke St. Saviour's rose. Mine are thriving!

At present, a team from the Cathedral – led by Dr John Quilter, is working on a Conservation Plan to remedy water damage, among other matters. Our Cathedral Wardens are endeavouring to reduce expenses, and increase Cathedral income, to ensure the long-term sustainability of its ministry. To this end, they will, with Bishop-in-Council's (BiC) blessing, lease the Cathedral offices and some parts of the Cathedral precinct commercially.

5. Encouraging Healthy Communities Confident in Christ

Our Diocese is blessed with many motivated, gifted and talented priests, deacons and lay leaders. We must never take so great a gift for granted. Their commitment to Jesus and their love for you are the tools the Holy Spirit is using to grow the Kingdom in our midst, so that some might be saved.

Noting this, I'd like to focus for just a moment on *new* communities of faith and activities.

In this past year, many churches have started new projects. BiC has formally created the Sutton Road Mission District, currently under the weather-eye of Dr. Royce Thompson, and the Mulwaree Anglican Mission District – a creative and fruitful initiative of Dr. Tom Frame.

Pelican Foundation Grants have supported a raft of activities that are maturing or just finding their feet in Wagga, the Sapphire Coast, O'Connor, Manuka and Woden.

The All Saints' College development in Ainslie is nearing completion. It is an inspiring local ministry idea seeking to tackle a genuine community need - namely the critical shortage of affordable rental properties for Canberra's relatively large student population. I am thankful for the visionary leadership of Father Michael Faragher, who is on leave, and set to take on a new parish in Brisbane. We are very much in his debt. Thanks also to the project Chair, Dr. Ingrid Moses, (who is also the Chair of Anglicare) and Dr. Colin Dundon, who will act as locum for Ainslie. As a Synod, we extend our sympathy and condolences to you Colin, and your family, following the recent death of our dear sister in Christ, Mrs. Joy Dundon.

Similarly it was a delight to see St John's Care open its new building to better provide a range of emergency relief and assistance programs that support people across the Canberra region. Well done Mrs. Sue Jordan, the Reverend Paul Black and all the staff, volunteers and supporters.

In this past year, we've explored new ways to breathe life into existing parishes. A team ministry approach has started in suburban Holt led by lay Church Army Evangelist, Judy Douglas and the Reverend Dr. Brett Morgan. Another team is developing in the rural setting of Braidwood.

We've seen increased interest in 'renewal ministries'. Canon Gill Varcoe acts as liaison priest in this arena. Batemans Bay led the way with their series of 'Spirit' conferences. Bega, Yass, Ginninderra and Kambah have also offered ministry and retreats in this 'stream.'

Of course, we are blessed greatly by an active and enthusiastic Cursillo movement that has revitalised our Diocese in many ways. The movement that began here 35 years ago, spread around Australia, and then on to other nations overseas. Such offerings have the potential to bring much vibrancy to our Diocese - please God!

As you know, I welcome endeavours from across all our traditions. To this end, I am most heartened by the 'Deep Dive' seminars provided by parish of Jamieson; they are a forum for experts and non-specialists to discuss important theological, biblical and spiritual issues. I was similarly heartened to see

Radford College Dirrum Dirrum conference grow and develop. These initiatives remind us that God's dream of a world characterised by peace, justice and righteousness are shared by many people of goodwill.

Another 150th year venture was an international ministry to reach and serve Canberra's diplomatic and consular community. Archdeacon Paul Wallis, perhaps our most experienced church planter, invited people to gather for teaching and worship. His team recently took stock and recognised that they did not have the traction, or the momentum, to be viable in the medium term. Yes, church planting is a complex business and they made the tough, but correct, decision to discontinue the project.

Another small group of young people approached my colleague, Bishop Ian Lambert - who lives in Harrison - for teaching and pastoral care. This group was not formally connected with a local church. Well, numbers have grown, and Bishop Ian and Jill, with the blessing of other local Anglicans, now oversee an embryonic Anglican gathering known as 'Oaks Fellowship'.

Many of you know about my own commitment to planting and developing new communities of faith. With Jane and a small team, 'Fellowship at 5' – 'F5' was launched in Goulburn, in our Cathedral, two years ago. The group holds regular Sunday afternoon services, fellowship events and outreach activities.

6. Responding to Human Need through Care and Advocacy

As a diocese, our capacity to respond to human need through care and advocacy is enhanced by the dedicated staff and Board of Anglicare that operates across the entire Tri-Diocesan region, from Bourke to Broken Hill to Bega.

Working with people, many of whom are vulnerable due to age or impairment, is a great privilege but also a challenge, as Government standards for professionalism are rightly rising. As we heard at the Synod last year, the Anglicare Board, together with BiC, took the hard but right decision to sell Residential Aged Care facilities. This action was taken due to ongoing financial losses over many years and because the scale and resources to make the level of investment required in meeting current requirements, was beyond Anglicare's capacity.

Thus – and since last Synod, a significant transition in the leadership and ownership of our Residential Aged Care facilities – under Anglicare’s stewardship – has occurred following the Board’s decision to divest those facilities to RSL LifeCare.

RSL LifeCare’s vision for the wellbeing of residents and the place of chaplaincy ministry is very much aligned with ours. RSL LifeCare has agreed to continue facilitating our existing Anglican chaplaincy ministry within these facilities.

This was evidenced in the opening of the Chapel at the former ‘Brindabella Gardens’. The Chief Executive of RSL LifeCare, Mr. Thompson – himself an Anglican - encouraged Father Morton Johnston’s ministry as Chaplain, and applauded the efforts of all those who worked so faithfully and so selflessly to make that dream a reality.

The work of BiC, Diocesan Services, Property Trust, and Anglicare is to be acknowledged and celebrated. It was anything but easy. Their action has enabled ministry to continue and penury averted. We have all been very well served and those who led this process – Mr. Jeremy Halcrow from Anglicare and Mr. Trevor Ament from Diocesan Services, and their respective Boards and staff, have given their all in securing this outcome. As have the Auxiliaries and volunteers who have faithfully served those facilities over many years.

As the divestment was taking place, my Episcopal Task Force on Older People and Ministry was working to produce the very significant report that you will receive, and hear more about, this Synod. Archdeacon Emeritus Anne Ranse is the Convenor. I commend Archdeacon Anne and the Reverend Don Jamieson and their team for their diligence, tenacity and grace. A book, courses and programs through our Lay Centre comprise some of the fruit of their labour. And a partnership with St. John’s Parish Canberra will see a staff worker in the field presently.

The hard work at Anglicare extends far beyond a successful divestment. Anglicare is now in a stable financial position across all its various business areas and has produced a full year operational surplus.

This improved financial situation gives Anglicare capacity to invest surplus income into addressing social needs that the Government will not fund.

One example is the *Ignite Youth Mentoring program* in Wagga Wagga that connects young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with business and community leaders. For the second year in a row it has won a community grant from the NRMA.

This month will see the first of Anglicare's disability clients transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (or NDIS) which officially began in the ACT in July. In preparation, Anglicare partnered with Community Connections and Disability ACT in the *My Choice pilot program*. The Scheme has required Anglicare to invest in upgraded technology to allow individualised client management.

Meanwhile, Anglicare has relocated its Shaw's Disability Services to a more appropriate and newly refurbished facility at Holt. Plans for a therapeutic outdoor space called "the garden of possibilities" are also underway.

Anglicare is also set to run the Early Learning Centre and Out of School Hours care at Googong Anglican School. I'm advised that 75 children are on a waiting list. This is the first time an Anglican School and Anglicare have partnered in an early childhood service. It is a very significant development for our common mission and accords with my vision to integrate the specialist expertise of our various agencies and ministries to strengthen Anglican presence in our communities.

7. Connecting Church and World

The work of advocacy is not limited to Anglicare. Ministry across our parishes and agencies sees God's church connected to the world in so many different ways.

I am delighted that our capacity to serve with our indigenous sisters and brothers has grown thanks to the work of Archdeacon Karen Kime. Karen has represented us well in gatherings such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council, the World Council of Churches Gathering in South Korea and she has been a great help to parishes like Moruya, Eden, Cobargo, Batemans Bay, Ashmont, Turvey Park, Karabar and the Cathedral in Goulburn as we seek to make reconciliation a reality.

Karen has assisted Anglicare staff with developing their cultural understanding of Indigenous people. She has also mentored Indigenous people in ministry

formation and her advocacy for scholarships has been tireless. Although Karen has completed her term with Anglicare, her work as an Archdeacon will continue in a reduced capacity and I wish her well with her doctoral studies.

In recent weeks, I have also had occasion to write to our Prime Minister concerning the conflagrations in Gaza, Syria and Iraq. I note that our Immigration Minister, the Hon. Scott Morrison, has indicated that some 4,000 refugee places may be available to people displaced by religious extremists. I personally hope that this number will be above and beyond the limited intake already flagged by our Government.

Although my letters may appear weak and flimsy against terrorists armed with swords and rockets, such expressions of support and concern not only garner global interest, but leaders like Archbishop Mouneer Anis in Cairo tell me that they greatly hearten those living and serving across the Middle East.

The connection between church and world is a two-way street. The Royal Commission into institutional responses to child abuse has served as a 'wake-up call' to churches everywhere.

In our Diocese, requests for documentation from the Commissioners have been received. This means that all our extant files and notes for the past 50 years need to be accessed, ordered and cross-referenced.

The greater and more pressing task is meeting with and caring for survivors of abuse. And it is ongoing. This tragic aspect of our past informs every moment of our present and it will shape and influence our future. I give approximately one third of my week to dealing with such matters in one form or another.

While I was preparing this address, I took a phone call from a man in his 60's who was sexually abused by a Sunday School teacher when he was just four or five. He said that my belief in his story over the phone brought enormous relief and a measure of freedom. Yet, it is just a beginning for this fellow, and so many like him, because the damage is deep, and oftentimes generational, with whole families affected.

The toll on those who exercise pastoral care in this arena – especially our Professional Standards team - is also significant. Mrs. Celia Irving, the Reverend Peter Barnett, Miss Alison Payne and the committees and leaders who work with them are bringing great honour to the name of Christ in their ministry on

our behalf to survivors and their families. Pray for them because the stories and tears are distressing and depleting.

I should also add that as people receive ministry, costs are incurred. It is likely that this impost will increase – significantly - as people need to be compensated appropriately, while counselling and companionship on their journey to wholeness is also required.

This all makes our Lamentation Sunday such an important event, wouldn't you agree? And frankly, it is an offering that the watching world thought we should have made a long time ago.

Lamentation Sunday gave me the opportunity to apologise (on our behalf) and acknowledge the secret pain that so many have had to bear. In some cases, it also presented survivors with the occasion to talk to their families and tell their story. For many, I believe that journey towards wholeness has begun after 40 or 50 years of tortured silence.

Lamentation Sunday underscores our commitment to churches and ministry units being safe communities, increasingly free from abuse, harassment and bullying. Father Michael Armstrong – rector of St. John's Wagga Wagga - was the visionary and architect of the venture and he deserves full credit for this life giving initiative.

8. Promoting and Practicing Environmental Stewardship

The work of advocacy and the promotion of practical ways for parishes to engage in public discussion have caused us to rethink how we approach these many important issues.

Our diocese has long had an active Environment Commission. Under the leadership of Dr. Greg Rippon, the Commission has played a vital role in helping us understand the significance of climate change and the opportunities we have for being better stewards of God's creation.

Our new Social Issues Commission, under Bishop Stephen Pickard's leadership, will assist me and our Diocese to respond more effectively to presenting issues such as care for asylum seekers, sexuality, peace and violence and indigenous reconciliation.

9. Ensuring Transparency and Effective Governance

Transparency and effective governance is a critical aspect for any organisation. From our Synod, BiC, Ministry Executive and Property Trust we have twelve agencies, three company schools, six other entities, twelve committees and 60+ ministry or chaplaincy units. Good communication is essential in enabling the mission across such a large and diverse body; it is a work in progress.

The Anglican Diocesan Services aims to provide a platform for all these groups to access consistent, standardised and professional services as they manage their human resources, risk, finances, property, legal matters and car fleets. BiC believes that this shared approach will eventually deliver long-term benefits as we work together as a body rather than as disparate entities.

Let me offer three illustrations of this.

First, an immediate beneficiary of this new entity (apart from the Diocese and Anglicare) is our already referenced South Coast schools. Together with the South Coast Anglican College Board and the two newly appointed principals, the ADS undertook a major review of every aspect of the ministry to address debt, reduce outgoings, and redraft a new business plan.

The ADS was able to draw on the expertise of Ms. Heather Walsh for fiduciary and operational oversight. I extend my thanks to Heather and the leadership of Canberra Girls' Grammar school for their generosity and willingness to assist in this manner.

Second, the comprehensive work of our chaplains is being coordinated in a more ordered manner under the leadership of Archdeacon, Dr Matt Brain; an ADS funded initiative.

Third, the construction of the Jamieson Apartments. This landmark project is nearing completion with the first residents moving in around Christmas. To date we have sold 54 units "off the plan." Be quick... just 35 left!

Considerable interest in the three commercial units has been shown and we anticipate sales shortly. May I take this opportunity to commend Mr. Phil Davies, whose dedication in liaising with all stake-holders has been exemplary?

As we read Paul's admonition, we could easily make the mistaken assumption that he undertook ministry alone. The evidence of his own letters and those of St. Luke (in the Acts of the Apostles) is that Paul was a team player. Paul had fellow evangelists, travelling companions and people who prayed for him and met his needs. Paul was able to finish the race, because he 'ran' with others, who encouraged him, challenged him, and sharpened him.

Likewise our mission – informed by the dream to see people and communities transformed by Jesus' love - is a team activity forged by an alignment of purpose and resources with my diocesan office, our parishes, and our wide range of agencies.

Recently, BiC has been reviewing the Bishop's dream for our Diocese, its underlying focal points and the administrative framework needed to make mission a reality. In 2015 we will revisit our priorities and clarify some of the responsibilities of agency ministry partners so that we might yet run the race more effectively.

Final Observations

Let me draw this address to a close by noting issues of significance to our Church nationally, and the business that lies before us as a Synod, all of which are concerned with how we run the race together.

First, 'vitality' is becoming an issue for all dioceses whether in rural or urban settings. Culturally, we like to think of ourselves - if not as a Church for the nation, then as a Church where Anglican ministry is available to all. This approach can no longer be taken for granted. Parochial ministry in rural areas is ever more challenging, not merely because of changing population patterns but because of shifting cultural preferences. These shifts are challenging traditional models of congregations and the long-term sustainability of many rural dioceses has now become an open question.

We had the opportunity to discuss the challenges associated with vitality at the 16th General Synod, recently held in Adelaide. Anglicans nationally will need to find creative ways of working together and I invite you to download the report as it highlights many of issues that will challenge us in the foreseeable future also.^{vii}

In Canberra and Goulburn, we face our own challenges as we seek to address the demands of city ministry while at the very same time maintaining an effective and vibrant presence in regional areas where congregations may be elderly, and resources sparse.

The reality of high demands and thin resources are felt keenly by our 'Tri-Di' partners in Bathurst and Riverina. We've enjoyed an excellent relationship with the leaders and people of those dioceses but most of the shared ministries that we've promoted have now run their course. We have entered a new season of discernment. How might we more intelligently work together so that God's mission is advanced across southern NSW and the ACT?

And how *that* question is answered may depend on how the Diocese of Bathurst fares in the Supreme Court next year. In the mean time, I'm in regular contact with Bishop Ian and it's been a joy to meet Bishop Rob Gillion of Riverina and attend his Consecration in Griffith last month.

When it comes to working together, another matter to prayerfully consider and debate is the proposed Covenant for the Anglican Communion. If our Church nationally is a family of highly independent dioceses held together by common prayer, a shared culture and a loose federal structure, then *internationally* Anglicans are characterised by a certain liturgical similarity, a proliferation of languages, and bonds of good will that are regularly exercised yet tested by meeting together. For better or worse, Anglicanism is a family of interdependent yet autonomous churches, each pursuing God's mission in culturally diverse contexts.

Ten years ago, it was suggested that a covenant might provide an international framework capable of preserving the Communion in the wake of strong disagreements about the authority and interpretation of Scripture and issues around sexuality and ministry. Since then, forming any consensus about the need and the scope for such a framework has proven elusive. Australian dioceses and synods are not of one mind either. Consequently, General Synod wisely left the door open to further discussion. It is my hope is that we might yet discover that our diversity and even our disagreements can help us all to share in God's mission.

I am pleased to report that the Bishops from all dioceses in the Province of NSW – under the leadership of our new Metropolitan, Dr. Glenn Davies, are committed to working together for the advance of the Kingdom across our

State and Territory. And I know that our new Primate, Dr. Philip Freier, has a similar vision for the whole of Australia.

As did our former Primate, Dr. Phillip Aspinall. I take this opportunity to publicly commend Dr. Aspinall for his wise and even-handed pastoral care, his skill as an ambassador of the Australian Church, his giftedness in bringing leadership and direction to his own diocese, the vast and sprawling Province of Queensland (with the Northern Territory thrown in for good measure) and to the 23 disparate and autonomous dioceses that comprise our Communion!

One of those 23 recently lost its Episcopal leader, the Right Reverend John McIntyre, Bishop of Gippsland. Bishop John was a friend to many in this place and we continue to pray for his family as they mourn his loss and as that diocese – through its Electoral College – decides upon and then calls a Diocesan Bishop.

I wonder if we might also pause at this point to uphold in prayer, the former Head of our South Coast Schools, Mr Tony Horsley and his wife Jenny whose son Andy was tragically killed in an accident in Canada. Tony was a member of Bishop in Council, Synod and the Parish of Batemans Bay.

All of this brings us to the business of this Synod. We will have a chance to hear from our agencies how they are participating in Christ's mission.

The recommendations by the Episcopal Task Force on Ministry to Older People (about which you will hear more in this Synod) are significant - as is the question around reviewing our investment policy concerning fossil fuels.

We will also canvas Federal Government budget priorities, the enduring unrest in the Middle East, asylum seeker and refugee policy. On these issues, opinions will be held deeply, strongly and variously. We will not all be of the same mind. Rather than fall into divisions, my hope and prayer is that we will listen carefully, prayerfully and patiently to each other – with a view to 'Christianly' formulating a response.

Another key issue before us this Synod is the work undertaken by the Episcopal Election Review Committee. Since 2011, our Diocese has been considering the important question, what is the best process by which our Synod can discern God's call for its next bishop? No electoral process is perfect. The committee is inviting us to reflect on the various principles underlying the process, and how

we might balance them accordingly. Mr. Bob Arthur and Mr. Greg Mills and their team have served us well in preparation for this conversation.

Close

I have been wonderfully served in this past year by a company of able and gifted co-workers.

My Episcopal colleagues, Bishops Trevor, Bishop Genieve, and Bishop Stephen continue to be so very supportive and kind. As are Archdeacons, Matt, Bronwyn, Elizabeth, David, Anne, John, Karen, Caroline, Paul; our Dean, the Very Reverend Phillip Saunders and our generous and wise Chancellor, Justice Richard Refshauge.

The Diocesan Services team led by General Manager Mr. Trevor Ament, and my kind and selfless Executive Officer Ms Bev Forbes, Mr. Douglas Bucknell and the AIDF group, Mr. Jeremy Halcrow and the Anglicare family, our very hard working Bishop-in-Council, our Professional Standards officers – Mrs. Celia Irving and the Reverend Peter Barnett, my media officer, the Reverend Wayne Brighton, my spiritual director, the Reverend Geoff Taylor, my dedicated team of intercessors led by the Reverend Trish Stuart-Smith, my effervescent wife, Jane, and the Synod of this great Diocese are to be commended for their faithfulness and service.

Special thanks to our retiring Chair of Committees, Mr. Bob Arthur – upon whose wisdom and grasp of history, I constantly draw; my Synod Chaplain, Archdeacon Caroline Campbell and our Bible Study leader, Bishop Genieve Blackwell.

I'll be absent from the Diocese for nine weeks in the months of December and January – long service leave – prior to starting my 7th year as Diocesan in 2015. Vicar-General, Bishop Trevor, will steadily hold the reins, in my absence.

As we reflect on the past and look with hope to the future, we are working together to create an environment and a culture that lives and proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ; one that respects diversity and provides space for different approaches; a 'mixed economy' Church.

So that some might be saved, I dream of a Diocese wherein the love of Jesus transforms people and communities. In the Name of Christ. Amen.

ⁱ David Marr and Oliver Laughland, “Australian’s detention regime sets out to make asylum seekers suffer, says chief immigration psychiatrist” in *The Guardian* 5 August 2014 available online at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/05/-sp-australias-detention-regime-sets-out-to-make-asylum-seekers-suffer-says-chief-immigration-psychiatrist?CMP=ema> 632

ⁱⁱ Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce, *Protecting the Lonely Children*. National Council of Churches in Australia, July 2014, available online at:

<http://www.australianchurchesrefugeetaskforce.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ProtectingTheLonelyChildren.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Barely working: young and underemployed in Australia*. 1 Sept 2014, available online at: http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Barely_Working.pdf estimates that more than 580,000 Australians aged between 15 and 24 are either unemployed or want work but have insufficient hours, three times greater than the population overall.

^{iv} Jeremy Halcrow, “Dark clouds for jobless young people” 19 March 2014, available online at: <http://www.anglicancg.org.au/news.php/93/dark-clouds-for-jobless-young-people>

^v Australian Council of Social Service, “Wake up call for the nation: More than 620,000 people with disability living in poverty,” 22 March 2013, available online at http://www.acoss.org.au/media/release/wake_up_call_for_the_nation_more_than_620_000_people_with_disability_living

^{vi} Ben Pearson, “Carmichael coal mine’s impacts will be felt for generations” 28 July 2014, available online at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/environment/articles/2014/07/28/4025069.htm>.

^{vii} Anglican Church of Australia, *Report of the Viability and Structures Task Force*. 16th General Synod 2014. Sydney: General Synod Office. Available online at:

<http://www.anglican.org.au/general-synods/2014/Documents/books/Book%20for%20website.pdf>