

# ***Change and Transformation***

**Address and Mission Charge  
to the Synod of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn**

**+Stuart Canberra and Goulburn**

*31 August 2012*

## **Prayer and Introduction**

*Come Holy Spirit,  
enliven our hearts and minds;  
fill us with hope and compassion, courage and grace.  
For Christ's Name's sake we pray.  
Amen.*

What a joy it is to meet together in the service of Jesus.

I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land upon which we are meeting and in so doing honour elders past and present.

In this Charge I intend to focus on the concept of 'change and transformation'.

## Change and Transformation

That theme is taken directly from what has become known as the *Bishop's Dream* document (copies of which can be found in large print in our current *Anglican News*) where I pray that God will bless us with *changed lives, transformed communities*. You will have heard me state (at every possible opportunity),

*I dream of a diocese in which the love of Jesus transforms individuals and communities.*

As an anchor point for that ideal, please allow me to briefly take you to the first epistle of St. Peter (probably written in Rome around 30 years after Jesus had ascended into heaven).

In this epistle Peter encourages his readers – many of whom were enduring adversity and persecution (under Nero) for their faith in Christ – to press on in their call; to live as agents of transformation and conduits of grace.

Peter begins with a powerful Trinitarian greeting. God's people are those who have been called by God the Father, set apart and made holy (sanctified) by the Spirit of God, so that as forgiven children of God (through Christ's shed blood), they might live in obedience to Jesus, the Son of God (1 Peter 1:2).

God-in-Trinity, cooperating to save and sanctify those who are his.

Instinctively and joyfully Peter cries,

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you who through faith are shielded by God’s power... (1 Peter 1:3-5a).*

“New birth” (1:3) or “born again” (1:23) is the summary term Peter uses to describe the transformation that has taken place. And this “new birth” is intended to engender hope and wholeness; healing and life to the wider community of which they are a part.

They are, says Peter, to “live an exemplary life among the locals so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives”. (The Message: 1 Peter 2:12).

They (and we) are to get rid of all malice, deceit and hypocrisy, envy and slander (2:1); they are to maintain civil order and support those in authority (2:14); they are to live in harmony with one another, exercising compassion and humility (3:8); they are to offer hospitality and use their gifts for the common good (4:9,10) and with gentleness and respect they are to speak to others about the hope which is theirs (3:15) – so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ (4:11) (noting in their context...and increasingly in ours – it is in the crucible of opposition and disappointment that their characters will be formed and their witness to Jesus amplified). Changed lives transform communities.

While a community transformed by Christ will certainly be harmonious, marked by a spirit of compassion and generosity, there is a more important factor being emphasised here. It is outward-focused. The culture of hospitality, gentleness and respect shown to those outside the Christian community is to be remarkable. So remarkable that it becomes the feature that defines the church to outsiders.

As it was true in first century Pontus, Galatia and Cappadocia, so is it true in 21<sup>st</sup> century, Wagga Wagga, Canberra and Queanbeyan and across our diocese: Changed lives transform communities.

Allow me to illustrate this:

### **Change and Transformation – 3 Stories**

“The thing about your church here in Temora, Bishop, is that they really love people!”

The Anglican Church in Temora had, as per tradition, organised the Debutante Ball and I was sitting next to the Mayor during the refreshments. Not only was he commenting on the excellence with which the Ball had been organised, he went on to speak about church members who ran businesses in town and others who made their living from the land; people who were honest and generous and community minded. They are the sort of people who visit shut-ins and the bereaved; who are the first in line to assist in fire and flood and drought relief. He said they were known for their market stalls and their arts and craft shows and their music programmes. And in a town of around 4,000

word gets out. I have relatives in that community (non church goers) who also speak very highly of the church and of the rectory families – the Jenners and the Faraghers before them.

Against that backdrop (of trust and credibility), the parish run a *Mainly Music* programme; it is oversubscribed. In keeping with other ministries the church provides, people feel loved and cared for. A team of volunteers welcomes young mums and (some dads) and grandparents and their toddlers each week, and during the morning tea that follows, the helpers often care for the children so the parents can talk.

Recently a Christian parenting course was offered to these families – the uptake was immediate.

Some families are filtering through into Sunday services or other ministries where they continue to hear of and experience God's love for them in Christ.

Changed lives transform communities.

The Reverend James Wood joined the clergy team of Queanbeyan & District Anglican Church in December 2006, and has had direct responsibility for ministry in the southern end of the parish which includes the congregations of Burra and Michelago. In 2008 he moved into the new eco-friendly clergy house at Burra. In the same year he was appointed as one of two chaplains at Jerrabomberra Public School as part of his ministry in establishing associations with a number of schools in the parish.

Through God's blessing there are now two morning services at Burra and recently they have begun a trial weekly service at Michelago.

James reports that establishing a new garden (in his new home) has been a helpful metaphor for transformation. His view is that at the heart of the garden is the compost heap – where refuse is transformed into substance that is good for the whole garden. So it is in the faith community. James believes we need to create a sacred space at the heart – where the stuff we'd like to discard or forget or throw away can be transformed into something that is good for our souls and our life together.

At Burra, James and his friends have turned the pews to face each other. The initial discomfort of 'nowhere to hide' has been replaced with openness to each other's joys, gifts and struggles. Further, they have used *Back to Church Sunday* as an opportunity to create an "Open Day" – inviting friend or passer-by to enquire and to 'come and see' who they are and what they're about.

In December at the Michelago Railway Station they will host their 5<sup>th</sup> Annual "Blessing of Animals *and* Carol Service" which tells the Christmas story –. Recently they hosted the "Blessing of the Fleet *and* Information Morning" for the three local Rural Fire Brigades at Burra. James rightly sees that it is a practical way of "opening the doors of our sacred space to the wider community".

Changed lives transform communities.

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Covenant Care Day Hospice – a ministry that has grown out of Holy Covenant Jamison - provides what Archdeacon Anne Ranse describes as ‘a day with a difference’ for older people with a terminal illness who are being looked after by an equally aging carer at home. The programme offers a day’s respite for those carers and a stimulating and loving change in environment for clients (a maximum of 12 at any given time). The Monday meetings are themed and clients participate enthusiastically in activities.

When planning Covenant Care, the committee discussed the possibility of offering a prayer time for those who might wish to participate. They decided to wait until routines were established. The clients had other ideas. On day one a fellow said, “we are dying you know and prayers would be good, even if it’s just the Lord’s Prayer”. Since then, Archdeacon Anne Ranse and her team have held weekly prayer sessions and a monthly Communion Service.

Anne tells me that there are times of sharing - as the clients develop friendships with one another - and times of sadness as they ‘farewell’ those who pass away. Covenant Care extends pastoral support to the families of the clients especially the carer; they conduct the funerals, and hold memorial services. This gives people the assurance that they will be remembered and their story will be told. Anne wrote to me the other week and said,

*I hear comments from carers about the value of Covenant Care; how it has enabled them to continue in looking after their dying partner at home, for the support the family receives, and for the love and kindness shown. I asked a lady a few weeks ago if her husband, just diagnosed with mesothelioma, would like to come to Covenant Care; would that*

*help their situation? She looked at me with tears in her eyes and replied with heartfelt words, 'That's an answer to prayer for us. I think I will manage much better with his care if I can have a break from it now and then'.*

Covenant Care has been blessed from the outset. The ministry is an offshoot of the Holistic Care Nursing program and now partners with The Palliative Care Society and Anglicare. It employs two professional staff and is assisted by around 20 volunteers. Covenant Care has filled a gap in the community providing day hospice care; the only such service in the ACT.

The Reverend Susanna Pain, rector of Holy Covenant Jamison shared this magnificent story with me recently. She writes,

*'John' is a client at Covenant Care Day Hospice. His wife 'Louise' is a volunteer. They were invited to a community lunch at our church in 2011 and heard about the planned hospice. They asked if they could be involved. As clients, they have appreciated the care at the hospice. 'Louise' is also a volunteer but she does get time to herself while 'John' is cared for. 'John' is just coming alive!*

*They went to St James, Holt one weekend to meet with a Day Hospice volunteer. Why? Because he had been so kind to them. Subsequently they have attended mid-week and Sunday services at Holy Covenant and our Birthday Lunch and they brought an elderly relative who is moving from Sydney to live with them. 'John' even attended a men's dinner. Ministry staff from Holy Covenant Jamison also shared time with them.*



Susanna quietly concluded, ‘...and John’ and ‘Louise’ are my next door neighbours’.

Changed lives transform communities.

### **Change and Transformation – Diocese, Tri-Di Partners, the Province, the Communion**

I do trust those reports hearten you as they do me. Perhaps one final story (that will lead into some wider observations) concerns you – *us*, as a Synod. Following our decision last year to work more closely with the dioceses of Bathurst and Riverina I received correspondence from around the Communion (and abroad) commending this Synod and this diocese for its beneficence and grace. Our resolution was cited at the General Synod Structures and Viability Task Force (of which I am a member) as one example of how dioceses might creatively engage with the challenges of debt, rural decline and limited resources in an environment where ‘cultural Christianity’ is less prominent.

I want thank you for your prayerfulness, hospitality and grace in the decision we made to engage more fully with our Tri-Diocesan partners. I am of the view that it was a courageous Christ-honouring expression of fellowship and love. Now, as you know from my pastoral letters and various pieces in *Anglican News*, the dioceses of Bathurst and Riverina carefully weighed their options and pursued other courses of action. My Episcopal colleagues +Richard and +Doug have both expressed enduring gratitude to this Synod for our

commitment to the 'Tri-Di' Covenant and to the greater cause of the Communion.

And we saw much of that – our commitment to the Communion in this Province - at the January Provincial Convention. As you know, hundreds of delegates from across NSW, the ACT and eight other dioceses attended the January event that was held at Canberra Girls' Grammar School. The Archbishop of Sydney remarked (publicly) how blessed and encouraged he'd been by the fellowship, the worship and the ministry of those who led and taught. I concur. There was a wonderful sense of unity around the mission of Jesus. Let us take this opportunity to thank organisers Wayne Harris and Alan Wilson and those who served with them.

As we think of the Province, do also be mindful of significant leadership change: Our dear friend, the Right Reverend John Stead (latterly of Bathurst Diocese) was elected to serve as Diocesan Bishop of Willochra and another friend of this Diocese, the Right Reverend Rick Lewers, was elected to the great See of Armidale.

Over the next few months Bishops Richard Hurford (Bathurst), Doug Stevens (The Riverina), Brian Farran (Newcastle) and Len Eacott (Defence Force), will step down from their current positions. This is closely followed by Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney, who completes his term of office next year. We must ask the Lord to raise up godly and gifted pastors and leaders to fill these important roles.

Mention is to be made of the recent death of Archdeacon Robert Howell of Bathurst. Robert was Vicar-General of that diocese and a great friend to many in the 'Tri-Di' family and across the Communion. Our condolences to Bishop Richard and our colleagues in the diocese of Bathurst.

Last year I spoke about the importance of partnering in the gospel. We continue to look for opportunities to support Anglican Churches in our wider region. Special thanks to Bishop Ian Lambert and Archdeacon Ian Palmer for their recent ministry in the Solomons and their fine work in preparing a ministry Covenant between the Dioceses of Ysabel and Canberra and Goulburn. This is a life-giving mutually beneficial partnership.

I also wish to record my appreciation for the leadership and ministry of Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. ++Rowan has presided over a turbulent decade within the worldwide Communion (including the drafting of an Anglican Covenant – links to which I have provided to all ministry units for study) and I have very much valued his grace, scholarship and creativity. He stands down to pursue a life within the academy. A Crown Appointments Board has been chosen to present two names to the Queen and Prime Minister of England.

Things British also cause me to reflect on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. I read recently that she has been the Head of the Church of England and Sovereign during the 'reign' of six Popes, six Archbishops of Canterbury and six or so British Prime Ministers. The world has changed beyond imagining in her lifetime and she has continued to serve her people with grace and compassion

and has openly declared her allegiance to Christ and his gospel. To Him be the honour and the glory. Amen!

On St. Bartholomew's Day we recognised the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the *Book of Common Prayer*. This great book worked alongside the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible to shape the English-speaking world. Where God spoke to his people through the vernacular of the King James Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer* enabled the collected voices of his people to engage with God in prayer and praise. The *Book of Common Prayer* has informed our worship, our theology and our praxis; an eternal legacy.

At this point I would like to acknowledge the fine contribution that my Roman Catholic colleagues, Archbishop Mark Coleridge and Bishop Pat Power have made in the wider community, the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and within the church of God. I count it a great privilege to know them and to have served alongside them both; I will miss their fellowship.

A high point (or series of high points) in our year – and a further expression of our commitment to life change and community transformation were the appointments of new regional Bishops and portfolio and territorial Archdeacons.

Bishops Genieve and Ian – and Archdeacon Karen Kime in her indigenous role certainly attracted media attention (and we can be proud that as a diocese we are taking some very fine ministry initiatives) but I do wish to emphasise that each person I have appointed has embraced his or her role with passion, enthusiasm and dedication.

I am also most grateful to Archdeacon Emeritus Anne Ranse for her remarkable work as leader of the Household of Deacons and now as convenor of my taskforce on ministry to older people.

In this the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women being ordained as Priests, we are also blessed and privileged to have Bishop Genieve present the homily at the Synod Eucharist, presently.

### **Change and Transformation – Anglicare**

Placing a priority on Mission will, I believe, continue to transform our most complex agency.

Anglicare is being reshaped to serve all three of our Covenanting Dioceses Over the past year, Anglicare has begun implementing a new strategic plan that aims to grow services into remote NSW. Anglicare is very aware that strengthening links to the parishes will be critical as it seeks to cover such a huge area of New South Wales. The Board has agreed to a new mission and vision statement aimed at reminding staff of the agency's Anglican identity and that ultimately the motivation for their work is shaped by Christ's call to serve those in need.

It is easy for staff to have their focus and priorities shaped by Government funding, and come to see the relevant Department as the primary stakeholder in Anglicare. Yet Anglicare should not, and does not, exist apart from the Anglican Church and its parishes. It is essential that the Diocese continues to support and invest in Anglicare and its work.

It is for this reason that I encouraged Bishop-in-Council to endorse the proposed \$8 million redevelopment of the Ginninderra Gardens facility to create an integrated site with specialised high care and dementia aged care provision. This proposal reflects the strong commitment I have given over many years that the Anglican Church continue to provide high quality aged care.

As you know, I was very distressed in January to hear of the decline in the standard of care at Ginninderra Gardens and made a commitment to ensure it would not occur again. It is clear to me that a significant injection of funds is required to completely reinvent the facility and the Diocese must lend support to Anglicare in bringing this project to fruition.

Anglicare's Chief Executive, the Reverend Peter Sandeman, is returning to Adelaide for family reasons. I am deeply appreciative of the service Peter has given over the past three years.

Peter passionately believes in the importance of building partnerships between Anglicare and local Anglican churches. Under his leadership, Anglicare and the Diocese have been developing integrated mission planning.

One of Peter's key decisions was the appointment of Archdeacon Karen Kime to support indigenous communities, identify gaps in service provision and implement solutions in partnership with local Anglican parishes.

Another enduring legacy of Peter's leadership will be the interface between fundraising and communications across the Bishop's office, the Registry and Anglicare. This has been guided under the able leadership of Mr Jeremy Halcrow. This month marks a major milestone in this journey with the finalisation of both the Anglicare and our new portal website which will be 'one stop shop' for all information related to the Diocese. (You can see the design of the portal website on the screen). This site will directly aid our mission with the addition of new features such a 'find-a-church' search function. The final touches are being made to both sites and we hope to make them 'live' shortly.

Peter Sandeman leaves Canberra and Goulburn with my good wishes and full support as he takes up a strategically important role as CEO of Anglicare in South Australia. He leaves our own Anglicare in a far healthier state in every way: not only in terms of the relationship with the Diocese but structurally and financially as well. We should all be very grateful to him.

With Peter Sandeman's departure on September 28, our Anglicare Board has decided to appoint an Interim CEO to ensure a smooth transition. This will also allow the current Executive to focus full-time on their very important roles and ensure the Board can take the appropriate time to find the right person to lead Anglicare.

Bishop Stephen Pickard has agreed to become Interim CEO from October 15. His task will not be managing the organization day-to-day but rather to facilitate and co-ordinate decision-making by Anglicare's Executive team. The expectation is that Bishop Stephen will be Interim CEO for a six month period.

He is accepting the role on a 0.5 basis, allowing him to continue his leadership of the parish of Pearce.

### **Change and Transformation - Special Projects**

Since the last session of Synod the Jamieson House Redevelopment Project has progressed steadily. To date we have recorded 42 apartment sales (with others pending). Demolition was completed in early September. The site has now been declared “clean” and ready for construction in October.

I do want to thank my honorary colleague, Mr Phil Davies, the Governance Group and the Registry staff for the time and energy and they have invested in this project. I also want to publicly thank the clergy and parishioners of St John’s, Canberra for their patience and grace in the midst of upheaval, inconvenience, and the challenges associated with sub-contractors who use sub-contractors!

To be clear, we are engaging in an exercise such as this in order to create ministry income streams. Transformation will require financial resourcing and this is one example of how that need is to be addressed.

In 2010 I made the difficult decision to suspended operations at the Wambiri camp site at Tathra while we reviewed our options. The situation at that point looked grim as the site had not been financially viable for a period of time. An independent review had identified a range of presenting OH&S matters. A task force under the leadership of Mr David Dillon (one of our Honorary Lay Canons) enthusiastically set things to rights and the beautifully renovated site



was able to reopen. The Diocesan Property Manager, Mr Michael Stallard, also served as Wambiri site manager for a season and Mr Tony Hancock and his wife Vicky are now permanently living at Wambiri overseeing the operation. The Registrar, Mr Trevor Ament, is currently reviewing new development opportunities so that Wambiri might continue to serve schools and other groups.

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Not far from Wambiri is another magnificent site – Manna Park. Manna Park comprises 150 acres of natural bush land with accommodation for up to 50 people, also camping facilities, an established men’s shed program, dedicated areas for playing fields, vegetable gardens, and a strong involvement with community and groups.

I am pleased to report that, following lengthy conversations with the owner, Mr Rob High, we have signed a ‘Heads of Agreement’ and will enter into a three year lease with an option to acquire Manna Park. This bushland sanctuary will complement our Wambiri site and the Diocese will be able to offer accommodation and camping facilities on the coast and within a natural forest setting. I am viewing this as a 150<sup>th</sup> gift to our diocese!

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The idea of a Queanbeyan-region school arose in the early ‘90’s. In 2009, the Diocesan Schools Council (DSC) undertook a feasibility study into such a project. In 2011, the Business Plan was approved along with the Deed of Agreement with the developer of Googong, CIC Australia, who gifted to the Diocese a site for a Primary school to begin in 2015. Googong, south of Queanbeyan, will ultimately comprise 16,000 people.

The DSC steering committee began planning – which included the appointment of an architect and negotiating first use of the Oval opposite our site. Integral in all of this has been the involvement of Christ Church, Queanbeyan. The DSC model of ‘church in the school’ will be in The Anglican School, Googong from day one.

While interest in the primary school has been very strong, enquiries about a secondary school have continued. In August, after lengthy negotiation, the Googong developer offered us the parcel of land adjacent to the primary site. While there is a cost for this new land parcel, the opportunity to have one block plus use of the Oval for a K-12 school is very exciting. The Googong development has proceeded quietly with no impediments. We will be the first school of any type in the precinct. A twenty year dream will become a reality.

### **Change and Transformation – Safe Ministry**

In just over two years the area of professional standards has been completely transformed. We have moved from a structure focused on responding to allegations of misconduct to a safe ministry model that encapsulates a multi-pronged approach. Elements of the model include: prevention to ensure safe practices and promotion of good health and well-being for clergy and lay leaders; early intervention where there are parish conflicts, minor ill-health or well-being issues; and recovery for parishes experiencing significant ill-health of clergy, major conflicts, or other trauma. In regard to responding to allegations of misconduct, we aim to support those who have offended in the past, and work with survivors of abuse towards restoration, as well as provide recovery for affected parishes.

Each aspect of the model takes into account our pastoral, duty of care, insurance and legal obligations, as we seek to keep all people physically, emotionally and spiritually safe, and where we fail to do so, respond with love, compassion and justice. Can I urge you to join with me in prayerfully upholding our safe ministry team – Ms Celia Irving, Professional Standards Director, the Reverend Peter Barnett, Deputy Director, along with my Episcopal colleagues and Archdeacons as they seek to effect change and bring about transformation to the glory of God?

### **Change and Transformation – Training for Mission and Ministry**

In response to the *'Bishop's Dream'* document and following an assessment of emerging education and training needs in Canberra & Goulburn and beyond, I am pleased to announce that St Mark's National Theological Centre will deliver three new Vocational Education & Training (VET) sector courses in 2013.

The Certificate IV in Theology and Ministry is designed to meet the needs of God's people who are seeking to learn more about the contents of the Christian faith while exploring a range of possibilities for community and workplace ministry. It can be completed on-campus at Barton or by distance (on-line) mode. The Certificate IV consists of six compulsory units and four elective units that will enable students to choose specialised modules that meet the needs of their ministry setting. The core units are: The Church in History, Introduction to the Old Testament, Introduction to the New Testament, Basic Christian Beliefs, Spiritual Formation & Discernment and Communicating Your Faith. The elective units (to be developed systematically

over the next two years) will include Youth & Children's Ministry, Pastoral Care, Aboriginal/Indigenous Ministry, Mission & Evangelism and Chaplaincy. There will be scope to increase the range of electives in successive years.

The existing Diploma of Anglican Orders (DAO) program – the course completed by candidates for the diaconate and priesthood ahead of ordination – is being revised and restructured. It will become an Advanced Diploma in Theology and Ministry in 2013. It is to be delivered over a two year period in Canberra and in the seven other dioceses where the DAO is presently delivered.

An Advanced Diploma in Professional Supervision was developed in 2011 and trialled in 2012. The course has two streams, one for Christian counsellors and the other for pastoral ministers.

Bishop Tom Frame and his staff have worked diligently and enthusiastically in preparing these programs. They are to be commended for their endeavour and creativity.

### **Change and Transformation - External witness to the world**

As St. Peter outlined in the text which frames this address: a community transformed by Christ is one that is remarkable in its spirit of harmony and culture of hospitality.

The way we speak to one another and to the outside world is to be marked by gentleness. Respect must be shown to all people, so the name of Christ is

honoured. All are to be invited to His table. Now beloved, the issue of same gender unions and partnerships is one that particularly requires grace and wisdom. In this house there will be a very wide range of views and experiences. To this end, I believe we need to be quick to listen, measured in speech and exemplary in conduct.

As you will know from my pastoral letters and my correspondence with parliamentarians and the Prime Minister (on a number of occasions), I support the provision of legal protection for same gender relationships - at the same time remaining committed to the traditional Christian view that marriage is a relationship ordained by God between a man and a woman.

Resolutions of the Australian General Synod have consistently supported marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, based on Scripture. Earlier this year, the Bishops of the Anglican Church of Australia acknowledged in a formal statement that we are listening to community discussion around changing legislation to recognise same sex partnerships - but do so affirming a commitment to the present definition of marriage in the federal Marriage Act.

Personally, I continue to observe that perceived discrimination against people in same-gender relationships is more adequately addressed through state recognition of civil partnerships.

I also appreciate that public discussion of these complex matters can sometimes lead to significant pastoral issues, better handled at parish level. I very much value (and need) your prayer in these matters.

Last year I spoke about the mandatory detention of asylum seekers and attempted to frame a response in the context of Christian hospitality. My

words then only seem more apt now given the deaths we have witnessed at sea over the past year and the bi-partisan decision to reopen detention centres on Nauru and Manus Islands. I said:

*What complicates the asylum seeker debate is that a compassionate response must also take into account measures that discourage people from risking their lives by taking dangerous crossings by sea... [But] There are two other ethical issues to consider when thinking about public policy around the asylum seeker issue: the fairness of the process and the proximity of the need. The parable of the Good Samaritan suggests we should help anyone who falls within our immediate reach... A focus on hospitality will take more seriously our responsibility for the ongoing well-being of asylum seekers who arrive on our shores.*

I do have concerns that the new arrangements may dilute Australia's responsibility for the well-being of asylum-seekers. Prolonged, indeterminate detention in immigration detention centres has been shown to have adverse impacts on the health of asylum seekers and to contribute to mental illness. It is hoped, as has been promised, that arrangements are put in place to ensure that errors of the past will not be repeated.

Whilst issues like a price on carbon continue to (rightly) focus media and community attention, I am advised by our Environment Commission that ministry units within our diocese are becoming more sustainable. This is not so much to reduce outgoings as it is to be more responsible stewards of God's Creation.

Here are three encouraging trends (or pieces of data) from our Environment Commission.

Firstly, our (substantial) diocesan motor vehicle fleet now comprises an ever increasing range of 'green vehicles'.

Secondly, the new 'Jamieson' apartment project will achieve a 'Green 5 Star' in building design and possibly a 'Green 5 Star *as built*' – a first in Australia if not the world. This hard work will also reshape our green building policy.

Thirdly, a recent Environment Commission/Anglicare trial showed that teleconferencing can and will significantly reduce (or negate) travel times, produce better Workplace Health and Safety outcomes and lower car fleet running costs. I commend this finding to you.

### **Change and Transformation - Anglican150**

We are all aware of the impact of the ageing on our congregations, and this is reflected in the data from the *2011 National Church Life Survey* released this month. Compared to a decade ago, there are fewer newcomers in our churches. And over that period the percentage of people who invited someone to church declined from 44 percent to 35 percent. This is likely to be a reflection of our ageing congregations. Other research has shown that as Christians get older our friendship networks outside our church community diminish.

But we must not lose sight of the positives. There are genuine strengths and signs of health we can build on. Compared to five years ago, more church members than ever are involved in a whole range of community groups associated with our churches. The number of church members involved in such groups has grown from 61% to 65% since 2006. My hope is that the Diocese's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations will help give further momentum to this trend, as we use the year to build better community connections.

As my Anglican150 team thought about how to use next year to embed a culture of mission within our churches they came up with the following slogan: be a pioneer, be local, be inspired. We want you to think locally but be given permission to take a risk.

Given the significance of this venture, let us, with St. Peter, cast all our concerns on Him who cares for us. (1 Peter 5:7) That is, we are to pray. Which is entirely in line with one of the guiding principles from the *Bishop's Dream* document: prayer is essential for our common life. So I will take the liberty of expanding the 150<sup>th</sup> slogan. It should read: be a pioneer, be local, be inspired, *be prayerful*.

It is for this reason that we have included prayer bookmarks in your copy of the address. We must make our 150<sup>th</sup> year a year of prayer.

When we pray that God will 'change lives and transform communities' sometimes God's answer will be to change us. In order to connect with the community, God may call us to change something about ourselves - especially the many ways we unintentionally put up barriers that stop people from entering our churches and joining our communities of faith.



One example that is dear to my heart is ensuring that our churches are accessible to people who have a disability. We recently conducted a survey of parishes to gain a better idea of the overall picture. Thank you to all those who participated.

I urge you to consider undertaking a project for the Diocese's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations to improve access to your ministries for the growing population amongst us that are frail aged or have a disability. Here are a few simple and achievable project ideas that I'd ask you to ponder.

- Ensure your sound system does not exclude those with hearing loss. Only half our churches have hearing loops.
- Have materials available for the visually impaired. Very few of our churches have large print or Braille Bibles.
- Consider how someone with a physical disability can enter your building. Once inside can they use the toilet? Around 40 percent of our churches do not have accessible toilets.

One of the very great blessings we can share with friends and neighbours is the gift of hospitality and welcome from a local community of faith.

That is also why Bishop Trevor and I have agreed to hold *Back to Church Sunday* on March 17<sup>th</sup> in 2013. Not only is it a very useful focus and start to our Sesqui-Centenary Year – it is also Lent 5. That means Holy Week and all the activities therein is only ten days or so after that. Invite people to *Back to Church Sunday* and then to your Passiontide celebrations is our suggestion.

Our wonderful Cathedral is set to host a range of events and ministries. One that I draw to your special attention is the *Gospel Heritage Day* on Saturday April 20, 2013. On this day many hundreds of people will converge on our See City via steam trains and other heritage-type rolling stock. Brochures are available for this great adventure and I commend it to you.

Putting on events alone will not be enough to impact our post-Christendom society for Christ. The recently released *Australian Communities Report*, conducted by McCrindle Research, found that when it came to knowledge about Jesus, 17% thought he never existed while 42% of Australians believed that Jesus existed but that he was an ordinary man and was not divine. Asked what century Jesus walked the earth, less than half of all Australians correctly identified the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, while almost 3 in 10 (28%) had no idea.

Of further concern (to me) was the finding that less than half of those surveyed (46%) correctly identified the New Testament as the place where Jesus' life was most fully recorded.

Therefore, to mark our 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations in 2013, I am inviting you to join with me in providing people with accurate information concerning the person and work of Jesus simply by giving them attractive, accessible translations of the New Testament. Simply by placing Bibles in the hands of those who would receive them, we are cooperating with Christ in his ministry of transformation and reconciliation: Peter was quite clear about this, "you have been born again not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God". 1 Peter 1:23.

The Bible League, Australia (with the blessing of the Bible Society in Australia) has agreed to supply me with up to 20,000 New Testaments that are to be printed with the Canberra and Goulburn 150<sup>th</sup> 'livery'. I will write a foreword and some basic information on following Jesus and all our churches will be listed as contact points. My dream is for each member of every congregation across all ministry units to pray for, and then invite, a friend or a neighbour or a colleague to receive a NT as a gift (at around \$2.00 per N.T. to the giver) – in the course of a year. 1 – 1 – 3 – 1 . *One* person gives *one* Bible to *three* friends in the course of *one* year. 1 – 1 – 3 – 1.

I genuinely believe that this very simple, and relatively inexpensive, gesture of love and concern will bear significant fruit (if not immediately, then over time).

'Opt in' only if you wish. The Reverend Guy and Mrs Sita Matthews have 'opted-in'. They have agreed to coordinate the programme and even at this early stage are setting me writing homework!

Throughout the period of Lent (in '13, '14 and '15) and as part of our 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations, I plan to travel into regional and rural centres across our diocese with a small group of people – carrying a large wooden cross. Upon arriving at each destination I will meet with locals for prayer and I will conduct simple public meetings wherein I will speak about Lent, Passiontide and the significance of Christ's death and resurrection. I believe the 'walk' will be both a talking and a rallying point for local communities. Mr Peter Stuart-Smith is the walk coordinator and he is currently working on capacity and logistics. My inspiration for this walk is our founding Father-in-God, Bishop Mesac Thomas. Bishop Mesac walked, rode and 'drayed' his way across Southern and South-

Eastern NSW (and some) ministering Christ's grace and faithfully preaching the cross. Pray for and join with me if you are able – Ash Wednesday is February 13<sup>th</sup> so the event is fast approaching.

A very wonderful mission and ministry tool that seems to have impacted almost every denomination in every continent is, as you know, the *Alpha* Course. In partnership with Alpha Australia, the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn is making available to parishes across our region (who would like to use them) the most recent Alpha DVD series presented by Jamie Haith. The talks are shorter in duration than previous iterations and are designed to fit within the average school term. The DVD's will come in C & G 150<sup>th</sup> 'livery' (to match our sesqui-centenary Bibles) and they will also have a short message from me as an introduction. This 150<sup>th</sup> project is being coordinated by the Reverend Margaret Campbell.

From the outset a major goal of Anglican150 has been to build a lasting financial legacy that will grow the ministry units and agencies of the Diocese. Pioneers who set out to explore uncharted territory also need an army of supporters. Your generosity makes a difference.

Assisted by Anglicare's Fundraising Manager Mr Trevor Capps we are working on a coordinated approach to fundraising across all our diocesan agencies for our year of celebration. To this end a brochure has been created to assist people to support a range of projects simply by leaving a small gift in their will. The hope is that this approach will help us build significant funds that can be drawn on for future mission projects.

We have also developed a brochure to support my Episcopal Fund. Our two regional bishops have been tasked to generate new mission initiatives. But that is only the beginning. We need to fund new evangelists, missionaries, chaplains, youth and children's workers. The list is long. But the reward of bringing people into the Kingdom is greater.

Each year for the next three years we need to raise \$150,000. Currently we are right on track at \$70,000. Your generosity is appreciated.

Copies of both brochures are available here at Synod.

Our coordinated approach to fundraising has also borne fruit through direct mail appeals this year. Our Flood Disaster Appeal raised over \$70,000 - nearly double the level of giving for all other previous fundraising Anglicare has seen during the Easter period. Thank you for your wonderful generosity. We have been able to help people across the Riverina and Central West, including over \$10,000 sent to support people living in West Wyalong parish of the Diocese of Bathurst who had lost everything. There were households in that parish that were significantly flood-affected but the area had not officially been declared a disaster zone. As a result residents could not access support through other channels.

The Brindabella Gardens "Chapel Appeal" is nearing completion. Since December last year gifts for this project have grown from \$170,000 to over \$520,000. With 80 percent of the cost of construction received, the Anglicare Board has agreed to proceed with the project in the expectation the final \$100,000 will be raised this year. Providing for both the well-being and

spiritual needs of the most vulnerable members of our community is a core ministry objective for this Diocese. My hope is that I will be opening the Chapel next year as one of our major 150<sup>th</sup> birthday projects.

Changing lives. Transforming communities.

## **Conclusion**

In the course of this Synod we will hear some wonderful reports of how the love of Jesus is transforming individuals and communities. Please do make an effort to encourage the organisations and ministries who have shared their endeavours with us - in the form of documents that are tabled – for their enterprise and faithfulness. It is very clear to me that hundreds of people are expending thousands of hours in the service of Christ and his Kingdom in this diocese in any given week.

In December I celebrate 25 years as a Priest in the church of God and this is now my fourth Synod with you. It is a great privilege to serve Christ in this way and I am very conscious that I am well supported by a remarkable 'family' that includes Ms Bev Forbes, the Registry Staff and our General Manager, the Vicar General and the Dean, my assistant Bishops, our Chancellor and the legal team, the Heads of Agencies, my Archdeacons, my intercessory prayer partners and media advisor, our Anglican150 team and the blessed company of Deacons and Priests and the glorious assembly of men and women, boys and girls who attend our churches and shine for Christ in their homes, neighbourhoods, places of work and service. My indefatigable wife, Jane, is a constant source of strength and encouragement too.

So, thank you beloved sisters and brothers for being conduits of change and transformation: to borrow from 1<sup>st</sup> Peter – thank you for living in harmony with one another; for exercising compassion and humility (3:8); for offering hospitality and for using your gifts for the common good (4:9,10) - and for gently and respectfully speaking to others about the hope which is yours (3:15) – so that in all things God may be – and will continue to be - praised through Jesus Christ (4:11).

*Blessed are you, sovereign God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:  
You pour yourself out in humility to rescue and bless,  
and you call us to walk with you in friendship.  
Transform us as we journey in the loving company of Jesus.  
In the name of Christ,  
we give ourselves to carry his love to the world,  
proclaiming good news to the poor, liberty to the captives,  
sight to the blind  
and freedom for the oppressed.  
In the renewal of our lives  
and the healing of creation,  
make your glory known.  
Blessed be God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Blessed be God for ever. Amen.***