



**THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS  
to the Third session of the  
52nd Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne  
Wednesday 17 October 2018**

**The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier  
Archbishop of Melbourne**

Let me first acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, the traditional owners of this land on which we meet, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Welcome to this third session of the 52nd Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne.

And I commence with these words of prayer in the Woi Wurrung language that were first sung as a hymn at the Merri Creek School over 150 years ago.

***Pundgul Marman, bar marnameek  
Nerrembee borun, yellenwa nulworthen bopup Koolinner***

***'O God, Lord God bless your Aboriginal people always'***

Recently, Aboriginal clergy from around the Province of Victoria met at Bishops Court over two days with the National Aboriginal Bishop, Chris McLeod, to work on ways in which the voices of First Nations people might be more clearly heard and honoured within the church. As a result of these discussions a Provincial Aboriginal Council was proposed. The idea is for this Council to engage with the five Dioceses of Victoria and provide a vehicle through which Aboriginal aspirations involving a more just process for reconciliation between the First people of Australia and the Anglican Church may be developed and implemented. The early indications from the meeting of Provincial Council last Friday are that this may be both a challenging and timely step in the journey of continuing reconciliation.

There are five Aboriginal priests within the diocese, three of whom work in congregational ministry, one in school chaplaincy and one in academia and with local Aboriginal organisations. I can report that a new local initiative emerged from the Bishops Court meeting, this is to organise a monthly gathering aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people led by the Reverends Shannon Smith, Glenn Loughrey and Garry Worete Deverell. It is intended to create a culturally safe place for Indigenous people from many places to worship and to bear one another's burdens.

## **REDRESS**

Last year I outlined the preliminary findings of the Actuarial Study on the extent of our financial responsibilities for Redress of Child Sexual Abuse in the Diocese. This modelling, ahead of the introduction of the Federal Government's National Redress Scheme estimated our liability to fall somewhere between \$12.2m and \$21m. Our accounts for the 2017 financial year have provisioned \$14.4m, a responsible liability based on the information. I am pleased that the Archbishop in Council has reached the in-principle decision to dedicate an initial capital amount of \$8m to which \$2.5m will be added annually for the next five years to give confidence that redress payments can be honoured.

It will be clear to us all that the large amount of redress payments that we expect to make over the next ten years will have an impact on our budget as well as our operational planning. The complete shape of the financial plan that will be needed over the next decade is the subject of earnest effort and is still being developed. You will, though, see some of its early principles shaping the 2019 budget and beyond.

The National Redress Scheme came into operation on 1 July this year and Melbourne Diocese has resolved to join Anglican Redress Australia, the redress scheme company of the national Church. The Prime Minister will make an apology to survivors of child sexual abuse in the coming days. This will be another reminder to us all of the devastating impact of abuse perpetrated by people who held trusted positions in the Church and other institutions in our recent history. I reiterate my apology to all survivors of abuse at the hands of those whom they trusted and in whose care they relied upon, especially within the Anglican Church. We have failed you, we believe you and we are sorry.

I am pleased to report that the Diocesan Redress Scheme, administered through MADC and Kooyoora, is receiving very positive feedback from survivors and their advocates. This scheme was established at the invitation of the Royal Commission initially as an interim redress scheme and now sits alongside the National Redress Scheme for any matters of redress that fall outside of the scope of the National Scheme. Our scheme, which is modelled on a trauma informed approach, provides access to care and contact as required by the survivor across their lifetime. The National Redress Scheme as it currently operates has a more limited opportunity for counselling support. I am pleased that there are choices for those who seek redress and was pleased to announce on 27 May this year, our decision to participate in the National Scheme, the details of which we are presently working through.

## **CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

You have all been involved over the last 18 months in the processes to enhance Child Safety within the church. This has arisen out of the Government enacting Child Safe Standards that apply to our institutional setting, and also through the Synod legislation that came from the 2017 General Synod, which this Synod adopted last year. You and your parishes are to be commended for the work that has been undertaken in parishes and other ministries as we have implemented the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct. I know that this effort has been significant and not without its share of challenges. Cultural change of this magnitude is always difficult and I thank you all for your perseverance and determination to get this right. The Diocese is committed to the establishment of Child Safe – Compliance officers in parishes in support of this cultural change.

At the heart of our gospel mission is the proclamation of God's reign of peace and justice. The Church truly being a safe place for all is an inevitable consequence of this Gospel truth and I know that you will continue to join with me in the challenge of enacting that imperative in the church communities in which we worship and serve. The Church has always stood as a bastion of safety and refuge. We cannot hope to speak into this need without the trust and social licence of the community. As we see increasing violence, inequality and domestic partner abuse, we need to be a prophetic voice of healing in this complex and worrying situation. Embedding a culture of safety and accountability is vital for its own sake and for the sake of those we are called to serve.

I have been pleased to see the development of our Prevention against Violence Program led by Robyn Boosey and chaired by Bishop Genieve Blackwell. Robyn has been appointed manager of the PVAW program and she has been active in establishing the Program's Committee of Management and taskforce of church and lay leaders across the Diocese. This program is expanding and moving beyond the early remit of active bystander and intervention work as it seeks to build skills in our parishes and congregations. It is essential for us to aim to change the culture of our society that permits violence and to address the norms, practices and structures that underpin violence against women. The Committee have just recently confirmed the program's vision as:

*'Positive, equitable relationships between and among women and men, girls and boys and zero tolerance of violence against women in the Diocese and the community.'*

Please support this important work in your parish.

Discussions have also begun that will involve both Theological Colleges and others in the Diocese in the creation of an accredited program around professional and personal boundaries.

Melbourne is also playing its part in the national Church effort through involvement with the General Synod Family Violence Working Group, chaired by the Reverend Tracy Lauersen, who has recently transitioned to a new role in the Diocese of Gippsland as the rector of Warragul.

## **PARISH PARTNERSHIPS**

The Prevention of Violence Against Women program and our emerging program for Disability Inclusion are a part of the broader work of Parish Partnerships. This initiative has been under the careful leadership of Archdeacon Jan Crombie for the last four and half years. I pay tribute to Jan's work in this area. Jan concluded her work in Melbourne at the end of July and has now returned to parish ministry in Brisbane.

The Reverend Dr Nick White has been appointed to the role of Diocesan Partnerships Coordinator and I warmly welcome Nick to this ministry. Nick will continue to work with our partners in Anglicare and the Brotherhood of St Laurence to explore, discern and nurture ongoing parish partnerships.

Homework clubs, refugee support groups, the Dream Stitches Sewing Program, the BSL Good Neighbour project and our own Pastoral Listening Workshops, have all been instrumental in training parishioners in a range of skills.

Hospital Chaplaincy is a vital ministry and has been at the heart of Anglican witness in Melbourne since the earliest days. We are funded by a mix of Government grants and money from our own budget. Spiritual Care Victoria administers the Government grants according to

the percentage of Anglicans in the most recent Census figures. You will be aware that the Census reports a decreasing percentage of people identifying as Anglican, this results in reduced funding for our hospital chaplaincy effort at a time when the chaplains report, in fact, an increasing workload. With our own budget being stretched it is not easy to pick up this shortfall from our own sources. As important as it is to have a professionally trained chaplaincy team I can see an increased role for volunteer chaplains into the future and greater involvement of parish partnerships to meet the growth of chaplaincy needs. At an individual level we can contribute financially to this work through the Melbourne Anglican Foundation Chaplaincy Fund or through parish giving on Hospital Chaplaincy Sunday.

### **FUTURE GROWTH IN THE DIOCESE**

You have received a detailed briefing on the budget that is reported to this Synod for 2019. It is clear from the information you have that our budget situation is tight and we are under significant operational pressure in the short term from high Professional Standards costs along with some timing issues in bringing more revenue on line. In the long term there is certain to be an impact of the cost of redress payments, both on the outflow of capital from our balance sheet and through the reduction of income as the available capital reduces. This situation is being addressed with some urgency but will not be turned around in a single budget period.

We can take some comfort from the prudent financial policies put in place after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. Responding to the collapse of value at that time of many of our investments, capital preservation policies were enacted across the range of Diocesan Trust and Legacy Funds so that their value could recover over time. This meant that for some of our Trusts the whole of the income to the trust over the last decade has been capitalised. With ten years elapsed there is now both the need and the opportunity for us to carefully analyse these funds and decide the extent to which the income they earn can be brought back on line for budgetary purposes. Taking this kind of long view of our financial situation is very important and I greatly value that this sort of forward-looking perspective guides the thinking of our Finance Committee. The Financial Governance Bill before this Synod will enable a much clearer way of dealing with these kinds of financial policy decisions. Its adoption by the Synod is to be welcomed.

Greater Melbourne and Geelong continue to experience urban growth with our population now exceeding five million. Our strategic goal of a ministry presence in each community of 100,000 people has been given a boost by the Melbourne Anglican Foundation committing \$250,000 as seed funding for Church planting initiatives in the urban growth area. This is a fund that is open for your contributions and, even though our budget is tight for the next few years, there is much good that we can do by generous giving to the Foundation for this purpose. As much as there is a financial need here there is also the need for people with a real heart for ministry in these new communities to come forward and commit their own effort to this cause.

We have worked to establish the policy settings to enable initiatives to proceed smoothly through feasibility and approval stages and there are several new initiatives in the pipeline to respond to the growth and people movement across our diocese.

## **NEW LEADERS AND ORDINANDS**

Both the number and quality of aspirants and candidates for ordination continues to be strong – there are currently more than 30 candidates for ordination and around the same number in the discernment program. We are, however, always in the situation of needing to encourage vocations, the harvest remains plentiful and the labourers, by comparison, few. I am pleased that we will debate a motion encouraging clergy and parishes to embrace a Vocations Day. This follows on from the motion moved last year on this subject by Bishop Brad. I expect to be ordaining at least 17 new Deacons in February next year, and we will have another large ordination of Priests next month.

Among those discerning a calling to serve God in Holy Orders are several who are open to pioneering new forms of ministry and faith expression. At last year's session of Synod we passed a measure that provided the governance instrument to enable new church plants in areas of strategic importance through the adoption of the Anglican Ministry Presence amendment to the Parish Governance Act. As I mentioned earlier I am greatly encouraged by the Melbourne Anglican Foundation's decision to partner with us by making some of its capital funds available as seed funding for new ministry initiatives under this measure.

## **YOUTH**

It is pleasing to see the structured approach now being taken in respect to Youth Ministry in the Diocese. The Reverend Conrad Parsons is working as part of the Parish Mission Resourcing Team to create communities of practice for youth ministers and volunteers on three levels: specialists, new youth ministers and volunteer youth ministers.

The specialist group has been assembled and the remainder are in formation. I hope that the specialists will be able to impart their knowledge and wisdom through advice and coaching and through their own development of communities of practice.

This model seeks to incubate new leaders and create a pipeline of new and emerging youth leaders. I encourage clergy across the diocese to link their youth leadership to this program and to participate in the youth supervision training that is on offer. I recently hosted an event with some of these young leaders at Bishops court and know how inspiring they are in their determination to serve God and renew the Church's vitality.

Developing effective programs that engage with the spiritual aspirations of the younger members of the diocese is critical for the future of the diocese. I am establishing a Youth Advisory Forum in 2019. This forum will meet twice a year and provide a place for the voice for our young people to be heard. Meetings are planned next year for February and August.

## **MULTICULTURAL**

We have nearly fifty clergy across the diocese who minister in a language or culturally specific context. Many more minister in highly multicultural congregations. English is a second or subsequent language for many members of our diocese. There are currently three Authorised Anglican congregations in the diocese that share parish facilities with an existing congregation while ministering to a culturally specific group. Clergy serving multicultural congregations have formed a working group to develop translations of services in An Australian Prayer Book. It was a great pleasure only a week ago to launch the parallel Chinese and English edition of the text of some of the most frequently used prayer book services. I am very grateful for Canon Robert Vun and the Reverend Ben Wong and their team for driving this important project to completion.

I am particularly interested and pleased with the degree of youth engagement in culturally diverse communities and pray that God will continue to nurture and inspire this in the future.

## **PARISHES**

The ministry life of the diocese is very vital at the parish and congregational level. Naturally enough many activities or ministry works are not as easily recognised outside of the parish. The development of a new diocese website, has however, provided an opportunity to see what services and ministry activity parishes are doing.

180 parish websites have been surveyed and I think that it is significant that there are 115 of these parishes that advertise mainly Music Programs, parish-based playgroups or Messy Church activities. Youth ministries are also represented in 30% of this group of 180 parishes. I think that this is a strong baseline of commitment to children's and youth ministry across the diocese against which future activity can be compared.

Opportunity Shops are relevant in the life of 56 of the 180 parishes surveyed and provide an opportunity for contact with a large number of unchurched people on a daily and weekly basis. The pathways model that is known to many of you through the work of Ken Morgan and the Parish Mission Resourcing team provides a model of how this sort of contact can feed into fresh faith journeys and renewed Church membership.

I congratulate and thank parishes for this presence in the community. I encourage all parishes to consider how they may develop and explore ways that God's word may touch many in our community.

## **MADC**

Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation (MADC) has continued to consolidate its position over the past year. The Corporation has made real strides to gather lay staff and clergy within its payroll system and is the effective employer of the clergy for the purposes of the WorkCover legislation – one of the main reasons for the corporation's formation. This means that the MADC is now a company of over 600 employees and deemed employees for the purposes of WorkCover and has an annual payroll of more than \$23m.

The Board of MADC has settled on a strategy for the period through to 2021. This includes the continuing development of human resource management and practices, the centralisation of all payroll processing and WorkCover management, and resourcing the Diocesan Vision and Directions as it is led through the work of Archbishop in Council.

I expect that between now and the next Synod we will have separated what has been since the MADC's inception the combined role of Registrar and MADC Chief Executive Officer. I am grateful for the big effort that Ken Spackman has contributed to the successful launch of MADC and it is now time to allow him to continue this good work with a sole focus on the effective operation of MADC as it serves the delivery of diocesan strategic objectives. Work has commenced on a revised role description for the Registrar's position now that the business services responsibilities are squarely with MADC.

The regulatory environment that the Church operates in has changed greatly over the last five years. Both the Royal Commission and the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Institutional Sexual Abuse Against Children have generated important reforms that require our compliance.

The MADC is working to address the identified priorities across a broad area of activity, even though its delegated and exclusive functions are in themselves quite narrow.

Your Business Papers include a report on the activities of the Corporation and details the interaction between the MADC and the Archbishop in Council. It is probably simplest to describe the emerging differentiation of function between AiC and MADC in this way: Archbishop in Council is concerned with matters of strategy and policy and the MADC resources the activities of the Diocese as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This Synod and the broader Diocese has been faithfully served by the Board of the Corporation since inception and I pay tribute to John Warburton and Dr Leanne Beagley who have concluded as Directors during the course of this year.

## **KOYOORA**

One of the important roles of the MADC is to oversee the relationship between the Diocese and Kooyoora, the Independent Scheme Company established to administer the Professional Standards Uniform Act. You will be aware of Kooyoora's broader role in the provision of clearance for ministry and clearance for service processes and its role in the administration of professional standards complaints.

The establishment of Kooyoora by this Synod, under the Professional Standards Uniform Act was a genuine response to the Royal Commission recommendations about the importance of independence in the complaints and redress processes.

A little over a year into their operation, Kooyoora continues to strive for best practice in complaints handling and resolution. Since January of this year, Kooyoora has received 161 requests for assistance through the 1800 number and has received 32 complaints. They have processed 132 clearances for ministry and good standing requests and have become the point of contact for the Commissioner for Children and Young Persons (CCYP).

When we adopted the Professional Standards Uniform Act we expected that the cost of Professional Standards management in the Diocese would in time reduce. To date this has not been the case, which is disappointing. At that time in 2016 we did not anticipate the increased reach and complexity of safe ministry checks, the impact of introducing clearance for service and the requirements of mandatory reporting and the requirements of the Commissioner for Children and Young Persons. As well as these operational and compliance demands we have also seen the growth of complaints of bullying arising out of parish ministry contexts.

The impact of Redress payments and administration along with the costs of Kooyoora's operations generally have had a significant negative impact on the operating budget of MADC. It is probable that the costs associated with Kooyoora will be more than double the \$450k allocated in this year's budget and our planning for 2019 indicates a likely funding requirement of \$1.3m for this activity. These are significant costs and work is underway to understand from Kooyoora how the direct costs of their operation can be contained and reduced over time.

This is likely to involve a greater emphasis on preventing conflict and disputes in parishes escalating into bullying complaints. Alternative dispute resolution pathways are available and may need to be activated earlier and more often to respond to matters that are more suited to resolution by this means. Indeed, we have already seen the deployment of teams within the Diocese to assist parishes where low-level conflict exists.

I know that there is always interest and a range of opinions about the venue for our meeting of Synod. The Synod Business Committee has determined that the 1st session of the 53rd Synod in 2019 will meet here in the Cathedral and a decision regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> session to be held in 2020 will be made in the next few months because any suitable alternative venues require several year's advance booking. The cost of alternative venues is prohibitive but the advantage of enhanced facilities will be factored in to the decision.

Members of Synod will be aware that we have been working on better managing the range of issues that assist the inclusion of people with disability in the life of the Church. Disability Inclusion has been added to the outcomes of our Vision and Directions Strategic Framework. This will be served by a Committee of Management structure, the employment of a Program Manager through funding from the Diocesan Insurance Office and the formation of a Disability Inclusion Reference Group. This structure is based on the pattern and learning from the successful Prevention of Violence Against Women Program. Access to Churches is often problematic especially in buildings that are constructed over multiple levels. We need to understand and then act on the information we have to make our worship and other activities more inclusive for disabled people.

### **SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

The Federal Parliament moved quickly after the conclusion of the postal ballot on same-sex marriage to amend the Commonwealth Marriage Act. The Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017, became law on 8 December last year. This is a significant cultural change in our society. The legislation provides for ministers of religion to only solemnize marriages according to the principles of their denomination, which for Anglicans means that clergy are only authorized to officiate at a marriage between a man and a woman.

Naturally enough the commitment of love and self-sacrifice to each other in marriage is very personal commitment as much as it is a key relational building block of our society. Christianity will be seen by some as a central plank of the hetero-normative culture that has criminalised homosexual people and their behaviour and still doggedly resists change. For others it is a first order concern to uphold the received teaching of the Church that marriage is only open to people who are heterosexual in their attractions and relationships. It is easy to see how this becomes a very personal and sometimes risky conversation when people disagree. It is no wonder that suggestions about continuing conversation are met with circumspection.

Archbishop Justin Welby has made the case for what we might call 'good disagreement'. He says, "We are one because Christ made us one, in spite of our disagreement. The *koinonia* of the Anglican Communion holds within its unity, difference and deep disagreement. It is by staying together in our disagreement that we bear witness to Christ as our only source of Communion. Deep disagreement may well make that certain communion less visible and more strained, but if communion is indeed the irreversible achievement of the Paschal Mystery, nothing we can do can break it. If the Church is called to be the sign and servant of God's design for the communion of all under the Lordship of Christ (Ephesians 1), then maintaining communion at a time of serious disagreement becomes an evangelical witness".

We need to approach the items on our Synod agenda that open up this significant concern and different points of view with prayer and confidence in the deep Communion to which we have been called in Christ. Kindness in thought and speech towards those with whom we disagree will undoubtedly be a great virtue in our life together in these next days.

We will soon, on 10 December, celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This action by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 arose out of the very immediate background of the suffering of so many civilian non-combatants and displaced people during the Second World War and its aftermath. Australia was one of the eight countries tasked with the drafting of the declaration and Dr HV Evatt was highly influential in the shape of the final draft. It is a tragic irony that a country like ours with such a proud history of asserting the moral truth contained in the Declaration is responsible for the continued suffering and despair of the refugees and asylum seekers on Manus Island and Nauru. The bipartisan support for the current policies is a cause for profound dissatisfaction for many of us. Synod members who were here in 2014 will recall gathering for a photo just outside on the Cathedral pavement under what was, then, the new banner that proclaimed, 'Let's make refugees fully welcome' as an expression of our solidarity with refugees who have found a home here in Australia, those who face an uncertain future in transit countries as well as those stranded in offshore detention. How sad that four more years have passed with no meaningful change to the prospects of the men on Manus Island and families on Nauru.

Bishop Philip Huggins concluded his responsibilities as the Bishop for the Oodthenong Episcopate this Monday just passed when he reached the age of seventy years. Bishop Philip has had long and meritorious service as a bishop in Perth Diocese, as the Bishop of Grafton, the Administrator of Ballarat Diocese and here in Melbourne since his appointment as an Assistant Bishop in 2004. Bishop Philip gave great leadership as Board Chair of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and continues as the President of the National Council of Churches in Australia. He has been a generous disciple of Jesus and has been one of the most intentional people I know in keeping Our Lord in his heart and his mind as he goes about his daily ministry.

Thank you Philip for the friendship and care that you and Liz have shown to Joy and me during our now 12 years in Melbourne and before that when I was Bishop of the Northern Territory. I know that many others will testify to your care and faithful ministry. This has been evident across the range of responsibilities you have exercised in this diocese in Melbourne and Geelong. Thank you especially for your most recent ministry as the inaugural Bishop of the Oodthenong Episcopate and your unfailing advocacy for those people who would have otherwise gone unchampioned in our community.

I know that you will all join with me in expressing your appreciation to him and in praying that Bishop Philip and Liz will have a rich and fulfilling time in all that comes after this season of ministry.

The Council of the Diocese concurred with my nomination as an Assistant Bishop of The Reverend Kate Prowd at the June meeting of Council. Now Bishop Kate, she was consecrated a bishop on 6 October and is amongst us in the second week of her Oodthenong Episcopate responsibilities. Bishop Kate has maintained a bi-vocational ministry in her profession as a Psychologist alongside chaplaincy, parish and Examining Chaplain ministries. I think that there will be more ordination candidates in the future in whom we may recognise a bi-vocational ministry. Kate's appointment as a bishop will give heart to younger candidates that this is 'real' ministry that does not cut them out from senior leadership in the church.

I also think that it is be good to have another woman in the team of bishops in Melbourne. I know from talking with some of the younger women clergy in this diocese that our ministry culture and practice is still experienced as shaped by and for men. I don't think that we can be

complacent about this and need to actively shape the culture of ministry in this diocese by having more women in senior positions of responsibility.

Thank you all! I single out my Episcopal team, Bishops Genieve, Paul, Brad, Philip and Kate; Bishop John Harrower in his work as bishop assisting the Primate, Ken Hutton my Executive Officer and all the episcopate team, the Registrar (ADOM) and Chief Executive Officer (MADC) Ken Spackman; the Senior Staff team of Archdeacons; Archbishop in Council including the Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor and Advocate; the Business Services team which includes Finance, Property, HR, the ADF and Anglican Funds, Insurance, Anglican Media, IT, Archives and Parish Support; the Dean and the Cathedral especially for the hospitality and worship that they offer us over the next days; the Area Deans as they have embraced our wellbeing initiatives; the Anglican schools, agencies, and chaplaincies.

All those I have mentioned serve the ministry in your parish, authorised Anglican congregation, chaplaincy or other context. You and your ministries are at the centre of all that we do. Committed membership, spiritual worship and outreach to those who are not part of the church in the communities in which you serve are at the heart of making the Word of God fully known. May we all, clergy and laity, be encouraged and enlivened for the daily living of our discipleship as a follower of Christ.

I know that our Synod membership changes over the three-year term of the Synod but I do want to appreciate those of you who have shown your commitment to the governance of the Diocese by your unfailing presence over the last three years. Welcome to those amongst you who are attending Synod for the first time, Synod like all aspects of our life together as God's people can only thrive as it is renewed in each generation and across cultures.

Let us approach our Synod with the confidence that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church will through the presence of the Spirit enlighten our hearts and minds – our thoughts and our speech to the glory of God the Father. Amen