

Synod 2017

My Years in the Diocese of Bendigo

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Bishop of Bendigo

2003 - 2017

First Session
of the
Fortieth Synod

Around the Bend I Go!

“Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Grace be with all of you.”

- *Hebrews 13: 24-25*

On a bitterly cold Saturday morning in June 2003 I was installed as the 11th Bishop of Bendigo!

The diocese was still in recovery mode. Eleven years earlier the diocese had imploded following the closure of the diocesan school, Girton Grammar in Bendigo. The school was closed by the diocese at the end of 1992, but reopened six weeks later as a parent owned independent school. Under the leadership of some dynamic parents and community leaders, the school and name was saved to live on and is now thriving. The impact on the diocese was to send it close to oblivion. For three years the diocese was without a bishop until the situation of the debt left by the collapse of the school was resolved.

The bishop at the time resigned and left the diocese as the school was about to close, leaving the diocese bereft without its flagship school, no bishop and a mountain of debt. The Metropolitan at the time, Archbishop of Melbourne and Primate, Dr Keith Rayner, quickly moved to help support the diocese and the Rev'd Canon Alf Austin was appointed Administrator.

The diocese had to clear a debt of \$14M and this left the diocese in a precarious and uncertain state. With the assistance of Archbishop Rayner, funds were found in 1995 to appoint a new bishop, and the Archdeacon of Newcastle, David Bowden, was elected the 10th bishop of the diocese.

When I began in 2003, the debt had been cleared, but the diocese was left in a parlous state with a part time Registrar, scant resources and many challenges to be addressed.

The beginning was not easy. The bishop's house in Bendigo had been purchased in 1982. A large, newly built brick veneer on half an acre of ground not far from the centre of Bendigo. Sadly as a result of drought and a long vacancy of over eight months the garden was largely dead and the house, after twenty years use, needed a significant makeover.

When I stood in the back door of the house and looked out into the large back yard, except for a stand of tall gum trees and the scant remains of a garden it reminded me of Ezekiel's "valley of the dry bones." There was potential, but a lot of hard work ahead to bring it back to life. It stood as a symbol of the diocese, potential with much hard work ahead and so it has been. There were faithful laity and clergy who had gone through a difficult and demanding time but the diocese faced many challenges if it was to survive. Another image I had at the time was like an actor standing on a stage and the set was a whole series of doors and every door I seemed to open presented me with another challenge.

So as I reflect back over my years as bishop I thought it would be helpful to use the viability criteria that I drew up for the 2014 Report to General Synod on the Viability and Structures of the Anglican Church of Australia as the vehicle of my reflection.

There are ten criteria:

1. Capacity for mission
2. Demographic factors
3. Geography
4. Diocesan resources
5. Governance
6. Leadership
7. Distribution, number and age of clergy
8. Goals and strategy of a diocese
9. Capacity to resolve persistent problems
10. New models/expressions of being Church

I. Capacity for Mission

Over the years, the diocese had been a very generous supporter of a variety of Anglican missions, particularly CMS, ABMA, and BCA, but mission was largely viewed as something we did beyond the diocese.

I wanted to develop a sense of mission in our diocese and enable people to understand that the mission of the church was where we are; it's where we live and move.

I also wanted the diocese to understand that we were not there to take Jesus to people, but to help all of us discover Jesus is here! I recalled in many sermons and addresses that I gave around the diocese the famous words and experience of English theologian and parish priest, Kenneth Leech:

“It was the very ordinary life of this obscure London Street which brought home to me the common-ness of grace, and the ordinariness of the spirituality. I think I went there believing that I was bringing love, bringing intellect, bringing care, possibly bringing Christ, to the poor deprived Cable Street community. I came to see that it was who was deprived, that it was I who was in need of love and care, that Christ was to be found there and did not need to be brought in from outside, and that until that fundamental truth of God's presence and activity in the midst of the oppressed and downtrodden is recognised, all pastoral ministry and all religious life will be unreal.”

- *The Eye of the Storm, DLT London 1992*

This became a fundamental principle to understanding mission and beginning to develop the mission capacity of the diocese. And it just wasn't about God's presence 'in the midst of the poor and downtrodden' which describes the context of Leech's parish at the time in East London. It's about realizing the presence of God is in all our communities: From Donald to Heathcote, Daylesford to Red Cliffs, and all the communities, cities towns and districts that make up the Diocese of Bendigo, and the task of the church was to make Christ realised and known in all of them!

'Capacity for Mission' builds as the people of God across the diocese begin to discover what is mission and that we are all part of it and live it every day. In addition to my own input there were three significant visitors to the diocese over the years.

In 2006 Canon Robert Warren, in 2007 Archdeacon Bob Jackson and in 2011 and 2012 Michael Harvey visited the diocese to lead workshops and speak at clergy conferences to strengthen the diocese's capacity for mission. A quote from Bob Jackson gives a flavour of what all three visitors brought to the diocese:

*“The evidence and arguments so far suggest that dioceses are the key units for determining the future decline or growth of local churches, and that the ethos, culture, structure and policies of the diocese will partly determine its own future growth or demise. By ‘diocese’ is meant the senior staff and other diocesan post holders, synods, boards and committees constituted at diocesan level. This is an optimistic conclusion because it means that decline is not preordained by either the changing environment in which the diocese operates or by the nature of its parish churches. **Its future lies at least in part in its own hands.**”*

- Bob Jackson, *Hope for the Church*, p. 168

This was a key for my own leadership: focus with the Registry and senior staff, to be optimistic and accept that part of the future of this diocese is in our own hands.

To encourage the development of mission capacity I introduced Mission Action Plans (MAPS) built on the four Gospel values of TEACH, GIVE, GROW and SERVE and ‘Back to Church’ Sunday.

2. Demographic Factors

Across the diocese demography does have an impact.

- In 1991 there were 65,235 nominal Anglicans out of a population in the diocese of 289,977.
- In 2011 there were 53,914 nominal Anglicans out of a population in the diocese of 311,342.

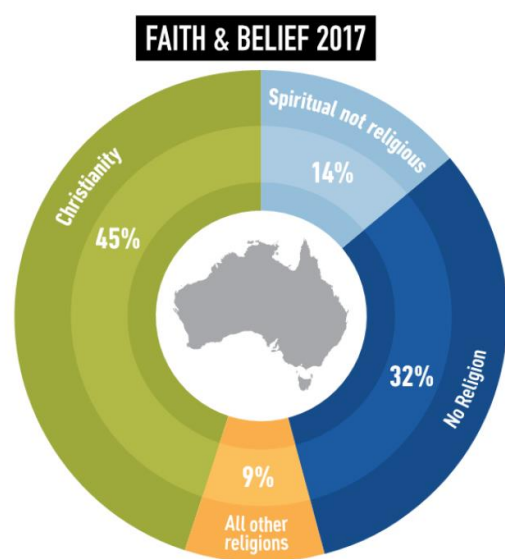
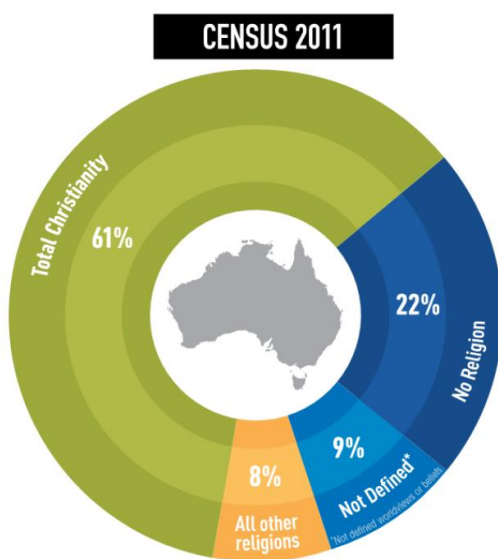
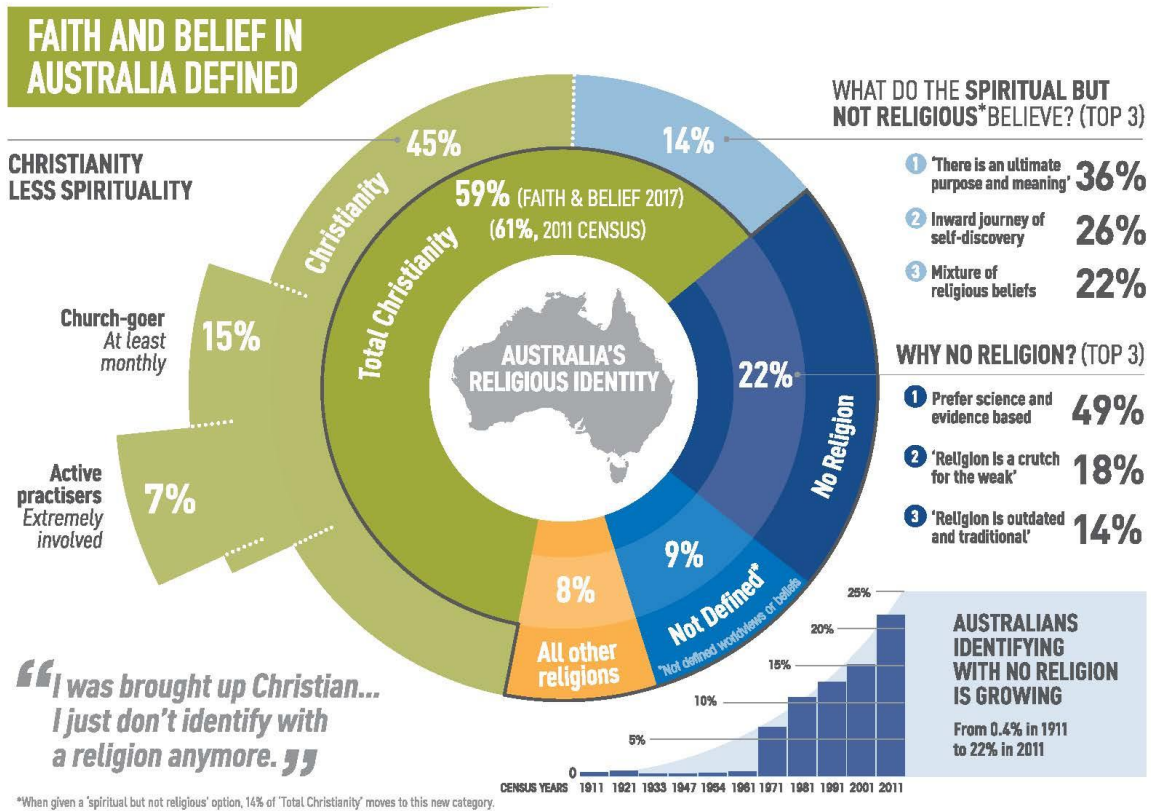
The 2016 Census figures are due out shortly, but the twenty years between 1991 and 2011 show a declining number of people on the Census are declaring themselves as Anglican, while at the same time the population in the areas covered by the diocese are growing, although most of the growth can be attributed to the City of Greater Bendigo and areas to the south of Bendigo. There is some growth around Echuca, Swan Hill, Mildura and Mooroopna, but rural populations around these cities are declining.

For members of Synod from rural parishes, you know that since 1991 there has been significant population decline and massive changes in farming and these trends are likely to continue. The impact on parishes has been significant with the congregations of many parishes declining and aging in our towns and cities. However, the task of the Church is not to be monopolised by decline, but to be focussed on the potential for growth. Although our society has changed dramatically and is largely secular, there are still many opportunities to engage our local communities. Increasingly we are going to have to think of congregations gathering outside of Sundays. Already a small number of congregations are doing this and seeing the potential to revitalise their churches.

From a statistical point of view I do not think the 2016 Census will bring us much good news, but we need to, as a diocese, take account of our demography and plan as to how we are going to address the implications of population change.

The following graphs from a recent study 'Faith and Belief in Australia' and Bernard Salt, a well-known demographer, gives some indication to the trends.

The Executive Summary and other graphs can be found in *Appendix I*.



3. Geography

You may well ask how this affects the viability of our diocese.

Over 80% of the Diocese of Bendigo, in terms of parishes and congregations, is within 90 minutes of Bendigo and this largely reflects the diocese pre 1977 prior to its amalgamation with St Arnaud. The other 20% of the diocese is spread over a large area of Victoria to the north west of Bendigo. From the south of the diocese, from Mt Macedon to Mildura is around six hours, and from Mooroopna to Murrayville, east to west is around five hours. The diocese embraces a wide diversity in geography from mountains to desert, wide open plain country to forests, and shares with the Diocese of the Riverina, the longest stretch of the Murray River of any diocese. I love the geographic diversity of this diocese and particularly the spectacular vistas of the big sky in all its manifestations!

My experience is that the further you travel out from the diocesan seat at Bendigo the harder it is for churches and congregations to feel part of the diocese. The Registry and I have put a lot of effort into addressing this issue and I want to make all churches and congregations feel that the diocese is accessible and will visit. This is also a fundamental part of the pastoral role of the bishop.

Geography also has a significant bearing in terms of the amount of time the bishop spends travelling, and of diocesan resources to serve a large and scattered diocese. People (often from outside the diocese) comment to me that the internet and technology must make a big difference to travel and ease of communications. However, my long experience is that *there is no substitute for a visit!* Even if it does involve travelling just on 800,000 kilometres in the last 14 years.

4. Diocesan Resources

This includes financial capacity, person power, diocesan infrastructure, and skill bank. It also includes the capacity of the diocesan administration and Registry to meet contemporary standards of management and financial practice.

Another dimension is the capacity of the diocese to implement and manage professional standards. The diocese last year took a major initiative in this area with passing model professional standards legislation which committed the diocese to be part of establishing an independent company to manage this responsibility. The company has been formed and is called Kooyoorra Ltd, named after a well-known state park in the Inglewood area, with the Dioceses of Bendigo and Melbourne being founding members. The company is expected to be fully operational in the next three months.

On the financial side, much has been achieved over the years to considerably strengthen the diocese's position. The Diocesan Ministry Trust has been re-established and now has \$3.25M and will continue to grow to reach its target of \$3.5M. If I was continuing I would like to see it reach \$4M, which would give significant security to the future of the diocese and its bishopric.

The DDF has been wound up, but the diocesan Common Fund, which holds the assets of parish trusts and endowments, has continued to grow. For over a decade it has been managed by the Myer Family Company, but at the beginning of this year the Finance and Investment Committee of the diocese recommended, after a tendering process, that the management of the Common Fund be moved to Atchison Partners - a Melbourne based firm with considerable experience in the not for profit area and is also currently working for a number of other Australian dioceses. As we will hear at Synod, the Common Fund will declare a dividend for 2016 of 7.2% (4.4% attributable to the Common Fund and 3.1% attributable to capital increases on property) - an excellent return. Another piece of good news is that the auditor's report on the diocesan accounts for 2016 were unqualified; the first time in my term as bishop. Very few dioceses in Australia would, at present, deliver these two outcomes and it is something for the diocese to be very proud of and to make sure it continues.

Much of the work that goes behind the Common Fund must be attributed to the excellent work of the team at the Diocesan Registry and I want to recognise the skill and the ability of the current Registry Team. Over my years as bishop we have gone through a few ups and downs in the Registry, but the current team is outstanding and I would ask the Registrar/General Manager, Naomi, to convey this to the staff from the Synod.

Another aspect of 'Diocesan Resources' is the skill bank. Many rural dioceses tell me that they struggle to be able to draw on people who have the necessary skills to run a modern organisation - which a diocese has to have to address the complexity of compliance, professional standards, accounting standards, risk management and strategy. We are fortunate to have such a pool and many people contribute to the vitality of this diocese, and a key role for the bishop is to be constantly on the look-out for people with skills and abilities that would complement the life and health of the diocese.

5. Governance

In my early days as bishop, I very quickly discerned that trying to govern a diocese using a Diocesan Council that met monthly but had a membership consisting of 26 was not the best way to operate. I wanted to introduce a more contemporary approach to governance. At Synod in 2004 I introduced an amendment to the Council of the Diocese Act to establish a Diocesan Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee was to be akin to a board, which would meet monthly (at least ten times a year) and have a power of delegation from the Council of the Diocese to deal with all temporal matters of the diocese: finance, property, legal matters, insurance and any other relevant matters. It would consist of:

- The Bishop
- The Vicar General
- The Chancellor of the diocese
- Two persons elected by the Diocesan Council (one clergy, one laity)
- Two persons appointed by the Executive for their expertise
- The Registrar would be the Secretary of the Executive

Compared with most dioceses in Australia, this was a radical innovation and took a while to bed down as traditionally the Diocesan Council dealt with everything from drainpipes to major diocesan projects. I was looking for strategic ability and a level of expertise that was not necessarily found on Diocesan Council. With the establishment of the Executive Committee the role of the Council would be to meet four times a year and develop policy and the Executive was to implement it. The Finance and Investment Committee was to continue as a sub-committee of the Executive.

We have, over the years, refined and made small amendments to the operation, but overall it has powered along since 2005 and provided the diocese with a strong governance model that has brought a level of accountability, transparency and leadership to shape the diocese for the future.

In 2016 another major initiative was the incorporation of the diocese as a public company limited by guarantee. For years, the diocese had only the Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation as its legal entity and it was undertaking legal matters way beyond its original brief. However, the motivation to incorporate as a public company came about for two reasons.

- (i) A court case in regard to the Diocese of Gippsland in 2013 became a major test case as to whether clergy should be covered by WorkCover in Victoria. The diocese lost the case and following negotiations with the interested parties it was resolved the Victorian dioceses would enter WorkCover and this meant the need to have a suitable legal entity to do so. Our clergy became covered in mid-2016.
- (ii) The Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Abuse in Australia due to various churches resorting to a legal defence mechanism, in Australia called the 'Ellis Defence.' This allowed dioceses that were only incorporated as Trusts Corporations to be very difficult to sue. Survivors of child abuse were reporting to the Commission that Trusts corporations were very difficult to sue in matters pertaining to child abuse. The Royal Commission was of the opinion that churches sheltering from being sued using the Ellis Defence should refrain from doing so and introduce changes to their style of incorporation that made them more accountable in the courts to being sued by survivors. The five Victorian dioceses agreed to do this.

So, the diocese now has two legal entities; the Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation (BDTC), which is a property trust, and the Bendigo Anglican Diocesan Corporation (BADC), which is responsible for the day to day operations of the diocese as an organisation. This means in our financial accounts we must meet the Accounting Standards of Australia, and are now subject to a wide range of employment and risk compliance.

The directors of the BADC are currently the members of Bishop in Council and as from this Synod it will be 16 members:

- four clerical members elected by the members of Synod
- four lay members elected by the members of Synod
- two clerical and two lay persons of the Diocese nominated by the Bishop
- one member, nominated by the Bishop, being either the Dean of Bendigo or one of the Archdeacons of the Diocese

- the Vicar-General
- the Chancellor
- the Advocate

Governance of an organisation as convoluted as the diocese is challenging and increasingly there seems to be more and more layers of compliance. The old days of the churches and dioceses just making decisions based on what might be ‘good ideas’ is long gone and now all levels of diocesan life must be subject to tough scrutiny and accountability. The Royal Commission has largely and rightly brought about much of this change.

6. Leadership

The Bishop of Oxford, Dr Stephen Croft writing in his latest book, *The Gift of Leadership-According to the Scriptures*, states:

“That leadership is demanding and difficult, is one of the key insights of the Christian tradition. Much contemporary literature begins from the opposite position: leadership is basically very simple and straightforward. But the reality is not like this. The world is a demanding and complex place. We are imperfect people ourselves and we work with imperfect people all the time. Events keep happening. Resources are scarce. The trajectory of leadership is seldom smooth or simple.” (p. x)

Although it is not often listed in the New Testament, Paul in Romans 12: 6-8 writes:

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given. If a person’s gift...is leadership, let them govern diligently.”

I looked up out of interest in the Oxford Thesaurus the synonyms for diligence and it had the following: assiduousness, hard work, concentration, care, effort, tenacity, rigour, thoroughness, perseverance, dedication and commitment. Quite an impressive list, and seems to reflect Paul’s own leadership in the early church. The word used in Romans by Paul can mean both to lead and to care, and there are two things to bear in mind. The gift of caring leadership is not something to be placed on a mantelpiece and stared at, but is a gift to be used for the mission of the Church and the glory of God. Furthermore, the language of ‘gift’ encourages us to receive the gift humbly from God rather than proudly boasting of something achieved - the gift of leadership is to be used for the benefit of all God’s creation and humanity.

In my leadership of this diocese I have endeavoured to follow this principle of both leading and caring, and the heart of it all has been my faith and sense of calling to be among the people of God, to know and understand them. I have therefore sought to know the various parishes of this diocese, the people of God who are in them and the communities in which they exist. I have sought to know every road and highway across the diocese, rivers, creeks, mountains, parks and plains. This is because you cannot lead if you do not fully immerse yourself in the context you are to lead in.

When I trained for the ordained ministry at Trinity College in Melbourne in the late sixties and early seventies, there was an incredible chaplain in my first two years, Barry Russell Marshall. He taught me a lot about leadership, which at the time I probably didn’t realise. A recent book on his life, *The Armour of Light* by Nola Firth, reminded me of this:

“For Barry the role of a priest was also that of a servant. Bishop Andrew Curnow remembered that from day one. Little things, like he was never afraid to do the most basic and menial things and if you had to run the Gestetner (printer), wash your cup or put the rubbish out, that’s part of being a priest. Don’t think you’re there to lord it over people. You’re there to be the servant of all.” (p. 80)

It’s a learning I have never forgotten and is at the heart of leadership: don’t ask people to do anything you are not prepared to do yourself! Today leadership tends to be preoccupied with skills and process, but at the heart of leadership is a genuineness of being or an essence of a person. Leadership cannot be claimed or contrived, but emerges from an extended process of discernment. When respect and trust are established, leadership can then be recognised and owned.

Over the years I have identified four key elements to leadership:

i. The Message:

A leader must have a message and as a Christian leader we have the greatest message of all to be told, taught preached and lived. The story must be embodied and lived out. If in any way a leader seems to contradict the story/message by the way one lives, or appears hypocritical, the message will not remain in the long run convincing. This we all know has been the downfall of many political, and sadly all too often, Christian leaders who have compromised the message. Authenticity and integrity are at the heart of leadership.

Leadership is not about pomposity, manipulation, or spin, but it is about telling a credible story that makes sense to people’s lives and offers them hope and wellbeing. Teach the Scripture, tell the great story of God, Jesus and the saints of the Church. Live the story with passion and confidence. That will produce leadership!

ii. The Context:

The eminent German theologian Karl Barth once said:

“The theologian can no longer be a lonely bird on the rooftop!”

People who are leaders need to immerse themselves in the environment in which they lead. Leadership cannot be detached and one cannot simply demand attention because of the position you hold, or use one’s authority to make undue demands upon your membership.

To lead you have to be involved in the world, but at the same time be able to distance yourself from it and be able to critically examine the world and its values. But you cannot sit outside the circle and just be negative and dismissive.

With regard to episcopal leadership, the Church no longer enjoys the status it once had, where bishops will have an immediate platform and will be listened to. More than ever leadership cannot be assumed or taken for granted or that authority is a given. For all leaders in our current contemporary context, leadership has to be earned. Today, episcopal leadership has to be well informed about the issues in which it wants to engage and be able to stand up to rigorous examination and debate. This does not mean bishops should not engage in public debate, but we have to know our area well and the context into which we are speaking.

iii. Relationships:

The relationship between a leader and one's stakeholders is complex and interactive. However, I constantly tell clergy the basis of all ministry is: relationships, relationships, relationships.

Gone are the days in the Church when a hierarchal figure could laud it over people and clergy and tell them what to do. The old models of being a bishop were often formal and conformed to patterns and models of behaviour that had been handed down over the ages.

Today a bishop must relate to the people and clergy of the diocese they are to lead. I have tried to do that by being accessible, willing to travel and visit.

As the ordinal says:

*“You must, therefore, know and be known by them,
And be an example to all.”*

Obviously the nature and importance of relationships for a Christian leader begins with one's relationship to God and the way that is expressed in relationships with those you are leading. This requires a good self-knowledge, an openness to mentoring and regular appraisal and the ongoing development of one's theological understanding and skills for ministry.

In this diocese two significant ways that I have tried to build relationships is to develop a collegial culture amongst the clergy. I have always maintained that if we as clergy can't relate and get along, what hope is there for the rest of the Church. To strengthen this approach I have relied upon two key gatherings of clergy; the annual Clergy Conference and Clergy Retreat.

I have also had the privilege of working with the Senior Staff group and the Senior Leadership Team and at this Synod I'm pleased to formally collate a new Archdeacon, Anne McKenna, Rector of Castlemaine. Anne, I believe, is the first female Archdeacon in the diocese and her appointment is a long overdue recognition of the leadership of women in the diocese.

I will also install the following Rural Deans for the next three years:

Loddon-Mallee	The Rev'd Simon Robinson
Campaspe	The Rev'd Jude Benton
Bendigo West	The Rev'd Brendan McDonald
Bendigo East	The Rev'd Glenda Templer
Mt Alexander	The Rev'd Canon Ian Howarth

Along with me and the Rural Deans, the following clergy make up the Senior Staff group which meets bi-monthly. It is a forum for sharing with the Bishop and looking at matters relevant to the clergy deaneries.

Archdeacons:

Archdeacon of St Arnaud	The Venerable Michael Hopkins
Archdeacon of Bendigo	The Venerable Greg Harris
Archdeacon of the Goldfields	The Venerable Anne McKenna

The Vicar General
Ministry Development Officer

The Very Rev'd John Roundhill, Dean of Bendigo
The Rev'd Canon Heather Marten

In addition to Senior Staff, since 2013 I have also commenced, on a fortnightly basis, a much smaller group, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) consisting of the Archdeacon of Bendigo, the Vicar General and the Registrar. We focus on parish vacancies, recruitment of clergy and oversight of diocesan administration. The Senior Staff Group and SLT are my way of strengthening and sharing leadership across the diocese.

iv. Values:

Values have to be the undergirding of all leadership. The Scriptures are laden with values that have been the mainstay of just civilizations for thousands of years. The ministry of Jesus built upon this and established what I would call Kingdom values as expressed in the Beatitudes. I have long drawn inspiration with a quote from Stephen Croft in his book, *Ministry in the Three Dimensions*:

“Jesus turns the values of human society upside down. The least important in society is to be the most valued in the kingdom of God: little children, lepers, tax collectors and sinners. The meek not the strong and powerful are to inherit the earth. The values of the kingdom are to apply especially among the community of faith, the church, where there is to be a completely different attitude to leadership.” (p.36)

The church is not a company or a government department and we need to be careful when adopting leadership models that fit the management and value system of large corporations. We can learn from them, but the value base for us is different and the church is a unique community of faith, hope and love which is called by Christ to be the Light of the World and the Salt of the Earth. The values from the Scriptures are foundational to leadership and must be reflected in the way we go about being Church.

Leadership is the most critical ingredient to being a healthy and effective diocese. At all levels of diocesan operation, this must be developed, mentored and encouraged.

My words here I realise have focused a great deal on my own view of leadership and the clergy. However, I want to highlight two other key areas of leadership that deserve recognition and attention:

i) *The leadership of lay people in the Church:*

Much of what I have written about leadership applies equally to laity and clergy. We both need each other. The training workshops being conducted by the Registry for lay leaders in the diocese has made me much more aware of the enormous amount our lay leadership contributes to this diocese and much more must be done in the future to equip and nurture this gift God has given us.

ii) *The second area is about gender balance:*

A recent survey by the General Synod Office on the representation of women on diocesan bodies across Australia revealed:

- That the last Diocesan Council in this diocese was made up of only 12% female representation. This compared with the Diocese of Gippsland which had 48% of its Diocesan Council constituted by women.
- The Diocese of Bendigo, out of 23 dioceses, had the third lowest representation of women on diocesan councils followed only by Armidale and Sydney.

When I read the report I was not only embarrassed, but also believe I have failed to effectively address this issue. I can only urge Synod and the diocesan leadership in the period ahead to bring about a better gender balance. It will not just happen, but requires effective planning and policy to bring about change and provide a better gender balance across all areas of diocesan leadership.

7. Distribution, Number and Age of Clergy

I do not believe one can talk about the distribution, number and age of clergy without talking about the diocesan approach to encouraging vocations and the elements of putting together a comprehensive diocesan ministry policy and strategy.

One night in late 2004 I was driving home from a meeting at Kerang which at the time, had been vacant for two years, and despite many enquires to clergy all over Australia to look at the parish there had been no outcomes. The parish was becoming increasingly dispirited and I kept praying for a sign as to what could we do. The sign came like the light on the Damascus road! My brain said loudly to me in the density of the night - why are you looking outside? The answer is right before you! This started me on the journey of developing a model of ministry that has come to be known as Ordained Local Ministry (OLM) which, along with the traditional model of stipendiary ministry, they are now the backbone of parish ministry across the diocese.

Following a development in the Church of England called Pioneer Ministry, this was also adopted by the diocese as one of the three expressions of ordination introduced as the diocese's comprehensive approach to ordination. I will briefly outline the three approaches:

i. **Stipendiary Ministry**

This expression is the most common in the diocese and includes most parish based stipendiary (paid) clergy. It assumes clergy in this category:

- Have undertaken a tertiary qualification in theology
- Believe they are called to ministerial leadership within the established parochial system of the Church
- Recognise that their gifts for ministry will combine evangelism with pastoral care, preaching, teaching and leading worship.

This expression of ordained ministry will aim to develop the life of the People of God in a parish context for the service of God in the Church and wider community. Sometimes in this diocese this expression can also have chaplaincy responsibilities added to it in a hospital, prison or with the Police, Fire Brigade/CFA etc.

ii. **Ordained Local Ministry (OLM)**

OLM ministry in the Diocese of Bendigo is seen primarily as an assisting ministry to the stipendiary clergy. However, those ordained as priest or deacon in this category are fully priest and fully deacon wherever they are licensed to minister. OLMs can operate in all parishes across the diocese as assistant clergy.

Some core values and assumptions behind this expression of ordained ministry are:

a) *Vocation:*

The call is primarily seen as coming from the Church rather than the candidate. The experience so far in this diocese has been of the Bishop “tapping possible candidates on the shoulder”, or from a process of discernment where in local congregations candidates are nominated by the congregation. All candidates enter the OLM programme, called the Ministry Formation Programme (MFP) and undertake the Trinity Ministry Certificate with other material. This takes two years and during this time the vocation of the candidate is discerned. Admission to the MFP is a recognition of the ministerial leadership and qualities that the candidate has already demonstrated. Following ordination the candidate undertakes another two years of formation in the Training in Ministry Programme (TIM)

b) *Contextual:*

A rediscovery of the local or contextual dimensions of ministry. OLM ministry is arising in this diocese out of a situation that can best be described as “local church – locally grown”. While it might seem best suited in rural settings, experience in the UK shows it is adaptable to all parish situations. As stipendiary ministry has a greater element of oversight in it, OLM offers an ordained ministry that is deeply embedded in the local community.

c) *Collaborative Learning:*

One of the strengths of OLM is its emphasis on learning in a team situation. In many ways it emulates the apprenticeship model of learning: the learner is placed with an experienced practitioner who from day one imparts their experience, wisdom and learning to the OLM priest or deacon.

d) *Flexibility:*

Those in OLM are not fully stipendiary, but most will be paid some stipend and allowances in recognition of the ministry they are undertaking. The Bishop sees the development of OLM ministry across the diocese as making a significant contribution to under-girding stipendiary ministry and at the same time allowing for a new and exciting expression of ministry in its own right.

Most people who become OLMs will stay in a particular area, but the Bishop holds the view that OLM describes a style of ministry rather than a geographically defined unit. In other words, the term ‘local’ is seen as referring to the locally originating call, not the locus of deployment. Thus in this diocese, OLMs may minister across deaneries or clusters.

iii. Ordained Pioneer Ministry (OPM)

The term Pioneer Ministry has evolved out of the Church of England, and adopted to recognise the ministry of people who:

- Are starting or sustaining a 'fresh expression' of church, a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people not yet members of any church.
- Are already ministering in a context outside of church structures. This may include street ministry, youth work, and social justice, ministry in a secular workplace or place of recreation. It can be anywhere people gather.

The Diocese of Bendigo recognizes the call of persons to Pioneer Ministry and is seeking through the Board of Ministry to establish this expression of ordained ministry. It particularly embodies the deacon's call to be an ambassador of Christ in the wider world.

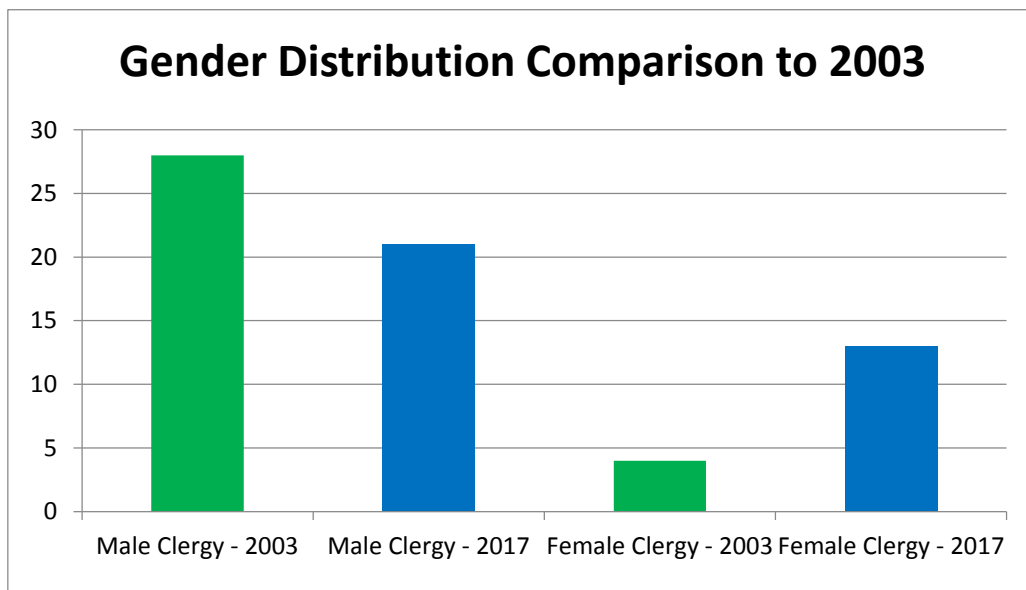
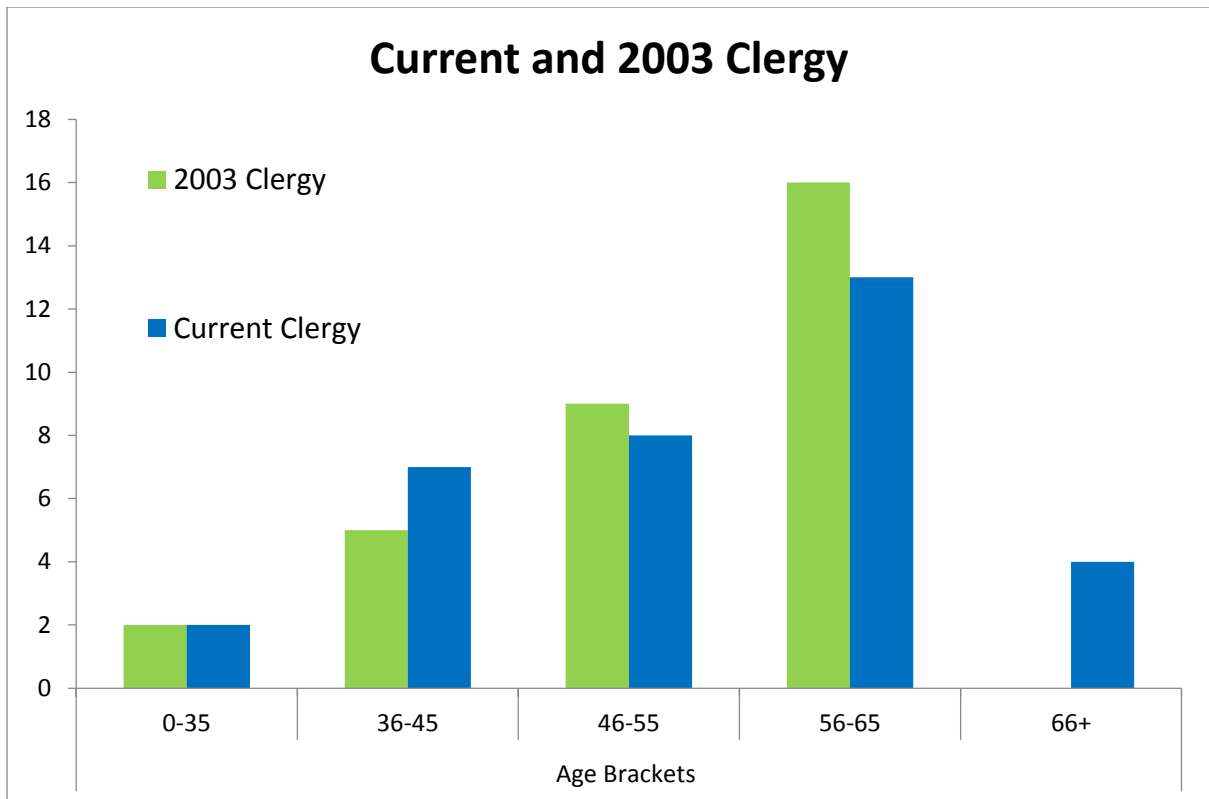
The Board has established the following list of qualities for those considering Ordained Pioneer Ministry:

- Authentic integrated understanding of this ministry
- Capacity to innovate and initiate
- Mature and developed devotional life
- Well-developed abilities to initiate change and enable others to face it in a flexible and balanced way
- Demonstrate maturity and robustness in the face of the demands of pioneering ministry
- Self-motivation
- A good understanding of Gospel and Culture
- A clear vision of how pioneer ministry fits with the Church's wider mission
- An ability and desire to work collaboratively
- A commitment to the Diocese and its mission, vision and values.

The training and ongoing supervision of Pioneer Ministers will be determined by the Board of Ministry. Some will engage in this ministry full time, while others will combine it with existing occupations. In the Diocese of Bendigo it will be non-stipendiary.

Through each of these expressions of ministry I have sought to intentionally lower the average age of clergy across the diocese and build a strong and talented team of clergy.

Over the fourteen years I have been bishop the biggest growth in the age brackets of clergy has been in the 35-46 age bracket and also the gender distribution has improved as shown by the following graphs.



The latest version of the Diocesan Strategic Plan I believe will continue to encourage this trend as will another piece of work the diocese is undertaking called CARD (Clergy Attraction, Retention and Development).



Finally, some good news under this area of the criteria is to tell you that a recent study shows that the diocese is continuing to replenish its clergy, both in terms of age distribution and gender and this will be clearly evidenced at the ordination in St Paul’s Cathedral on Trinity Sunday, 11 June.

Those to be ordained are:

Priest:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| The Rev’d Simon Chan | Christ’s True Light Church, Parish of East Bendigo |
| The Rev’d Neil Fitzgerald | Central Highlands Cluster: Parishes of Kyneton & Woodend |

Deacons:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Zan Daniels | Parish of Bendigo North |
| Margaret Wesley | Parish of Golden Square |

8. Goals and Strategy of a Diocese:

At this Synod the diocese will formally adopt a new Strategic Plan 2017-2019. As you can see by the diagram the plan is built around three core sectors of ministry and under each core sector there are focused segments:

Ministry:

- Inside the Church
- Outside the Church
- Diocesan Leadership

Resources:

- People
- Finances
- Property
- Information Technology

Safe Church:

- Safe people
- Safe Leaders
- Safe environments
- Professional Standards

Within each sector as you will see in the Plan there is a **Vision** or **Goals**, titled “We see a diocese where...”, followed by strategies to achieve that vision.

A Strategic Plan is a guide to what will happen - a signpost to direct the diocese forward in a variety of areas. It may need revision as the diocese goes along and is not intended to be a rigid or inflexible document.

In the previous Strategic Plan, which ran from 2013-2017, there were 38 goals of which 26 were fully achieved and I believe this was a very strong performance. A diocesan vision is ultimately about what a diocese wants to become and achieve. Our two diocesan strategic plans have been about:

- Strengthening ministry
- Promoting confidence amongst the clergy and lay leaders
- Building the Registry skill base and service culture
- Addressing property issues
- Strong governance and financial stewardship
- Creating a Safe Church culture
- Working on a slim infrastructure base, but being goal and purpose driven
- Encouraging a variety of ways of being church
- Involving the communities of faith and the wider community
- Using technology to promote the diocesan goals
- Being a healthy church

9. Capacity to Resolve Persistent Problems:

All dioceses face a range of persistent problems. Ours are never having enough resources to undertake all we want to do. Whether in the Registry where we operate with three full time staff and the rest are part time, or being able to provide adequate ministry to resource our many small rural communities.

There are always a variety of pastoral challenges that revolve around building healthy congregations. Many of our small churches will not grow, but they can be healthy. This area is also about the need for competent staff, clergy and laity and attracting and retaining well trained and able staff.

In many dioceses some problems seem to persist for a long time, be it low morale, lack of resources or even a denial that there are problems. Together all this can breed a culture of long term mismanagement and a growing lack of ability and confidence to address the issues.

It requires a diocese to be well aware of its strengths, and weaknesses, and especially how long these weaknesses have been presenting themselves to the diocese and have been put into the too hard basket. Most importantly it comes down to the capacity the diocese has to deal with them and this is related to the quality of senior leadership, both lay and clerical.

In this diocese I believe we have been blessed by both the lay and clerical leadership, which I believe I can accurately say to you in the fourteen years I have been bishop, has been built up, matured and developed. It combines and brings together a skill base that I believe is one of the strongest in rural dioceses in Australia.

This is supported by the quality of our governance structures and range of people who freely give of their expertise for the good of the Church in this diocese and for the Kingdom of God.

10. New Models/Expressions of Being Church:

In my time as Bishop of Bendigo I have endeavoured to be a permission giver in relation to trying out different models of church. At the same time I want those new expressions/models to be overtly Anglican in ethos, theology and worship. This does not mean sticking rigidly to the prayer books, but it means being creative, innovative and making churches accessible, safe and friendly.

Over recent years Australia has undoubtedly become a much more secular country, with seven in ten marriages now conducted by civil celebrants and only a small fraction of weddings being in churches a clear indication of where we are going. Coupled with the impact of the Royal Commission into Child Abuse, and the crisis in the credibility of the churches, the Church has some significant challenges and will have to be more adventurous and flexible in its structures and initiatives to connect to local communities.

Being adventurous can take place within a local parish church, but much of it will have to come from fresh expressions of church that will require doing things outside the normal bounds of our church building and this is a huge challenge. For the best part of 2000 years since the Church has had defined centres of worship and gathering, the whole focus of the

church has been to bring people into the fold, into a place of safety from the wild world that rages around it.

But now the Church is increasingly going to have to operate outside the fold. There are many examples of this already happening: internet initiated churches, café and pub churches, house churches, home groups, churches meeting in movie theatres or public halls and schools, multicultural churches, and gatherings of people interested in special areas of ministry or service.

In this diocese some examples of new expressions are:

- Merry Music, Music Makers: These are musical activity programmes aimed at pre-school children and parents.
- All age worship
- Shop front ministries such as RENEW at Red Cliffs; the Men's Shed, Op Shop and Drop In Centre at Nyah West; Café Church at Swan Hill; Home Groups; SEEDS at Long Gully; Walking Group at Kangaroo Flat, True North at Huntly
- Eddie Barkla's cycling ministry in Greater Bendigo

All of these expressions are designed to build bridges to the wider community and establish a relationship with people outside of the church. These expressions are often outside of the established church buildings and are designed to take the Church out into the wider community. For generations the parishes have concentrated on "bringing people in", whereas new expressions is by nature taking the church out to the world without any expectation of bringing people in. The Church has to find ways of being Church where people are!

This is a huge challenge as the Church has built its whole existence around people coming to it and we have a significant complex of buildings and services around our parish sites. In years to come this model will be greatly tested and the 'New Models of Church' has been developed to help parishes explore other ways of being Church. It will be a challenge for this diocese and although we have dipped our toe in the water most of our energy and activity is focused on sustaining the church as is.

'New Models of Being Church' has evolved as part of a movement to make churches more mission minded in their local contexts. It is not designed to replace parishes, but to help them look beyond their current operations/activities and engage people in local communities.

By undertaking this reflection I found it to be very encouraging and I believe it does show the diocese to be overall in good heart. This does not mean we do not have matters that will continue to need to be addressed:

- The sustainability of parishes.
- The training, retention and development of clergy and lay leadership
- The resourcing of the ministry development programme. Established to train OLM clergy, it is now training lay people for ministry as well
- With the growth of Greater Bendigo and predictions that the city in the next 30 years will reach over 200,000 people, planning for ministry in new suburbs.
- Growing the Rural Ministry fund to be established at this Synod
- Adequate resourcing of the Registry
- Developing a comprehensive property strategy: What church building will we keep?
- Strengthening the Safe Church culture

This Synod

As you will see the business at this Synod is limited and reflects that my time is nigh. You will notice in the Book of Legislation that the Chancellor has decided to rescind a number of redundant Acts as part of a process of tidying up our Acts of Synod. There are also amendments to various other Acts to make them consistent with various other Acts and pieces of diocesan policy.

There are some important resolutions, particularly in relation to National Reconciliation Week and the Diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan. Like me, you may have been listening this week to ABC's morning program AM which has been coming from Uluru where a national conference of the First Peoples of Australia is being held.



The indigenous peoples of Australia have struggled since white settlement for appropriate recognition and justice. The way in which we, as long term white Australians, have justified much of the settlement of this land and our history is an aberration of the truth. One only has to visit the Brambuk National Park and Cultural Centre at Halls Gap which has the most comprehensive display of the interaction between Aboriginal people and white settlement in Victoria to know it was not a happy event. On one of the walls of the centre there is displayed where Aboriginal people were shot in Victoria without any justification except to remove them from land.

As a nation we have much to be proud of, but the issue of Australia's First Peoples continues to be a thorn in our side and we cannot sweep it away or justify it. This is why every organisation and community need to deal with the issue of reconciliation in this country and what it involves. I believe that the Diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan will play a small part in this national initiative.

I want to acknowledge here also the role of the Rev'd Robyn Davis and Ed King who, for my entire time as bishop, have been associated with Koori Ministry and reconciliation across this diocese. At the end of this year both will formally conclude this role and as a diocese we owe them an enormous vote of thanks and appreciation.

At the end of my address you will also see my formal thanks to many who help this diocese function so effectively, however I want to acknowledge the former Advocate, Mr John Henry, who although only with us for a number of years, achieved a great deal in helping the diocese to address some significant trust and legal matters. I'm also delighted that Mr Damian Neylon has accepted the invitation to be the Advocate and is with us at this Synod.

The Future

One cannot predict the future and as far as the Diocese of Bendigo goes – it is not my responsibility. However, it is important to build the future of the diocese on some important foundations and these include:

A strong and coherent set of values of principles that undergird the health and viability of the diocese.

In many of my comments these have been implied, but I would add to them that the diocese must continue to be:

- **Innovative:** In terms of fundamentals that make this diocese distinctive are our governance that is transparent, rigorous and meets external compliance standards. The CARD research project: Clergy Attraction, Retention and Development is a first amongst Australian dioceses to build a comprehensive analysis of what will bring clergy to the diocese, make them want to stay and further develop their vocation and gifts for ministry and mission. Innovation is about being open to change!
- **Inclusive:** We are a diocese that is not theologically monochrome, but seeks to embrace the diversity of Anglicanism with good will and trust. At times that will be tested, but in my years here I have endeavoured to build a strong collegiality amongst the clergy that accepts diversity and that Christianity is not a single track religion, but encompasses a wide range of views and understandings. The goodwill that exists amongst our clergy should be a model of how the Christian community should behave and relate to one another. Being inclusive also relates to the multicultural diversity of many of our communities and I encourage our parishes to be open and welcoming.
- **Collaborative**, participative and generous in its practice of the faith and the celebration of worship that genuinely reflects the laity and clergy of the diocese working in partnership.
- **Upholding** the highest professional standards.
- **Clear** about its vision, purpose and sense of direction. The Strategic Plan will provide this impetus.
- **Being seen** to be doing a quality job
- **Marked** by an enabling style of leadership that embodies the above values and gives hope for the future of this diocese and its proclamation of the Gospel.

Over my many years of ministry I have been often encouraged by the great missionary Bishop Leslie. A church leader in India for many years after retirement he returned to England and continued to write and minister. This quote from one of his books is a favourite and a good point on which to close this address:

“The specific responsibility that has been given to the church and nobody else is the responsibility to bear witness to the reality of Jesus’ victory. Of course there is an enormous amount that we must do. The whole vast range of responsibilities which is summed up in our new ‘Trinitarian’ formula – justice, peace and the integrity of creation – these things in which we share with all people. They are part of our common responsibility as human and being and insofar as we neglect them, we certainly contradict the gospel we preach.”

But that which has been committed to the church exclusively, and which no other will perform, is the responsibility to tell this story.”

- *From Signs Amid the Rubble, William Eerdmans, 2003, p. 115*

Well it's time for me to stop. I still have another six months to serve as bishop, and for that time I'm still spiritually and temporally responsible for the diocese. At the same time the process for electing a new bishop has commenced and you will have an opportunity to participate in a consultation as a part of that process this afternoon. Please pray for the Electoral Board as they undertake this very important task.

In the six months that I have left there is still much to be done, particularly in addressing vacant parishes but I acknowledge the transition for my retiring has commenced and I believe I will leave the diocese in good heart and health.

“Do not therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”

- *Hebrews 10: 35-36*

Ordinations

- The Rev'ds Angela Lorrigan and Sharon Valentino were ordained priests in St Paul's Cathedral on 25 June 2016
- The Rev'd Melissa Clark was ordained a priest in St Paul's Cathedral on 22 October 2016
- The Rev'd Simon Chan was ordained a deacon in St Paul's Cathedral on 10 December 2016

Appointments

- The Rev'd Ian Howarth was installed as the Langley Canon of St Paul's Cathedral on 25 June 2016
- The Rev'd Terry Templer was appointed Chaplain to the Bendigo Health Group on 4 July 2016
- The Rev'd Tracey Wolsley was appointed Rector of the Parishes of Elmore and Heathcote on 18 October 2016
- The Rev'd Angela Lorrigan was appointed Assistant Priest (OLM) of St Paul's Cathedral on 31 July 2016
- The Rev'd Brendan McDonald was appointed Rector of Eaglehawk and Team Leader of the Harvey Town Cluster (Common Ground Maiden Gully and Parish of Eaglehawk) on 27 February 2017

Deconsecrations

- St John's Glenlyon was deconsecrated on Friday 23 December 2016.
- St David's Milloo was deconsecrated on 30 April 2017

Thanks

- The Diocese could not function without the Registry: Naomi, Jackie, Sarah, Rhonda, Andrew, Deb and Heather.
- To the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Dean and Vicar General John, Archdeacon Greg and Registrar Naomi
- To Canon Heather Marten for the Ministry Formation Programme
- To the clergy and laity of the diocese who faithfully day in day out are serving the Church.
- To Mr Ian Dallas as Chancellor for his dedication and wisdom.
- To Mr John Henry for his time as Advocate, and to Mr Damian Neylon, the newly appointed Advocate.
- To the Diocesan Trustees
- To Anne Baker in her work to establish the professional standards company Kooyoora
- To the Senior Staff Group: The Dean, Archdeacons, and Rural Deans.
- The Diocesan Council and Diocesan Executive Committee for their leadership and service.
- To the Churchwardens, Parish Secretaries, Treasurers and all who serve on Parish Councils.
- To the Editorial Committee of 'The Spirit'
- To Bishop Jeremy Ashton for his co-ordination of the Supply Team and for all those clergy who serve across the diocese as part of the Team.
- To all those who serve in a variety of capacities across the diocese, in congregations, communities, parishes, organisations, op shops and a host of other capacities.

Executive summary

Religion in Australia

Religion in Australia is not dead. This study shows that two thirds of Australians (68%) currently follow a religion or have spiritual beliefs. The number of Australians who do not identify with a religion or spiritual belief, however, is on the rise. Almost one in three Australians (32%) now do not identify with a religion.

Household upbringing influences religious identity. Almost half of Australians who identify with spirituality or religion in some way remain committed to the religion of their upbringing (47%).

Australians may identify with religious beliefs but are not always active in their religion. Just one in five Australians (20%, across all beliefs) are extremely or very active in practicing their religion or worshipping as part of a group.

More than half of Australians (52%) are open, to some extent, to changing their religious views given the right circumstances and evidence. Younger generations are more likely than older generations to be open to changing their current religious views (20% Gen Z, 19% Gen Y, 12% Gen X, 4% Baby Boomers, and 6% Builders say they are extremely/significantly open).

Conversations with people are the biggest prompt for Australians to think about spiritual or religious things (31% concur).

Discussing spirituality and religion

More than half of Australians (55%) talk about spirituality or religion (often or occasionally) when they gather with friends. Generation Z is the most comfortable of all generations talking (often/occasionally) about spirituality or religion

(65%). Baby Boomers, on the other hand, are the most uncomfortable, with half (51%) never talking about religion or spirituality with friends.

The greatest attraction to investigating spirituality and religion is observing people who live out a genuine faith (61% are attracted by this). Second is experiencing a personal trauma or significant life change (59%).

The top repellent to investigating religion and spirituality is hearing from public figures and celebrities who are examples of that faith (58% are repelled by this). This is followed by miraculous stories of people being healed or supernatural occurrences (52%).

There are spaces in society that are perceived to be more appropriate than others when talking about spirituality and religion. The two most inappropriate places are suggested to be shopping centres (deemed as very inappropriate by 23% of Australians) and community events or groups (12%).

Christianity

Australians vary in their current attitudes towards Christianity. When asked whether they themselves say that they are a ‘Christian’, almost two in five (38%) ‘consider themselves a Christian’ (compared to 45% who identify with Christianity as a religion). A further 24% are ‘warm’ towards Christianity with 12% neutral towards it. The remaining 26% of Australians are ‘cool’ (negative) towards Christianity.

Parents and family have the greatest influence on Australians’ perceptions and opinions of Christians and Christianity (57% say they have most influenced).

Faith and Belief in Australia

The biggest blocker to Australians engaging with Christianity is the Church's stance and teaching on homosexuality (31% say this completely blocks their interest). This is followed by, 'How could a loving God allow people to go to hell?' (28%).

Perceptions of Christians and Christianity are negatively influenced by the actions and behaviours of Christians in society.

Perceptions of church abuse are the greatest negative influence (73% say this is massive/significant), followed by religious wars (65%). Two thirds (65%) say they are negatively influenced by hypocrisy.

Christians

Australians differ in their knowledge and perceptions of Christians. Four in five Australians (79%) know two or more Christians. Nearly 1.5 million Australian adults, however, do not know any Christians at all (8%). For those who know at least one Christian, the top words used to describe Christians are:

1. Caring (41% select this word)
2. Loving (35%)
3. Kind (35%)

The Church

Just one in five Australians (22%) know a great deal or a lot about the Church in Australia. Six in ten (60%) know a moderate amount or a little. Almost one in five (18%) know nothing at all. Generation Y are the most likely to suggest they

know little or nothing at all about the Church in Australia (52% cf. Builders 34%).

Australians most value the Church and Christian organisations for their work with those in need. Australians highly value the work of the Church in looking after people who are homeless (74% extremely or somewhat value this), offering financial assistance/food relief programs (72%) and providing disaster relief (69%).

The supportive community (38%) is what Australians most value about the local church.

Social connections (24%) and the ability to worship together (21%) are also valued aspects of the local church. Two in five (44%) Australians, however, do not value anything about the local church.

Jesus

One in two Australians (53%) consider Jesus' life to be extremely or very important in the history and culture of the world. Only one in three (31%), however, consider Jesus' life to be extremely or very important to them personally.

Love is the attribute of Jesus that Australians connect with the most. The top three attributes of Jesus that Australians connect with in a positive way are:

1. Love (50% connect with this)
2. Hope (39%)
3. Care (34%)

HOW MUCH DO AUSTRALIANS KNOW ABOUT THE CHURCH GENERALLY?



18%
Nothing at all

60%
Moderate/a little

22%
A great deal/a lot

HOW WELL DO AUSTRALIANS KNOW THE CHURCH LOCALLY?



56%
Not well at all

26%
Moderate/slightly well

18%
Extremely/very well

ISSUE BLOCKERS Issues that are most likely to prevent 'non-Christians' who are 'open to change' from exploring Christianity (% Block completely)


Homosexuality
33%


Hell and
Condemnation
24%


Suffering
24%


Supernatural
elements
23%


Role of women
21%


The Bible
20%


Science and
evolution
18%

HOW MUCH DO AUSTRALIANS KNOW ABOUT JESUS' LIFE?

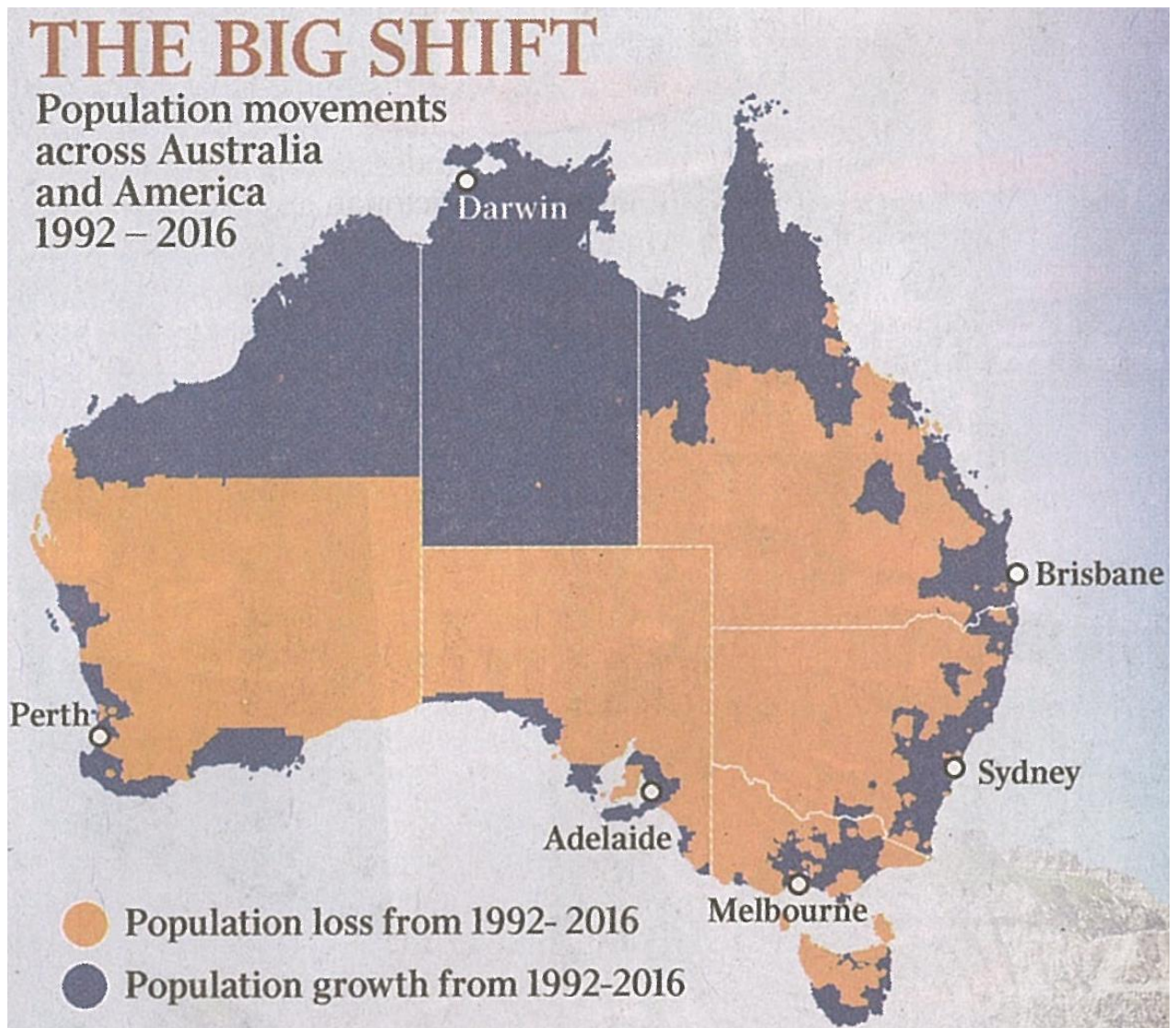


28%
Very little or nothing

24%
A moderate amount

45%
A significant amount

Appendix 2 – Population movements across Australia 1992 - 2016



Appendix 3 – Summary of time in Diocese of Bendigo 2004 – 2016

2004

- At Synod – set a goal to see “things really work in the Diocese of Bendigo”
- Nicole Cox appointed Registrar half time
- Report from the Church of England: “Mission Shaped Church”
- Limited tenure introduced to make appointments of Rectors 10 years
- Diocesan Standing Committee replaced by an Executive Committee with power of delegation from the Council of the Diocese
- Diocesan Ministry Trust established (Bishopric Endowment Fund)

2005

- The contribution of Cursillo recognised
- Gannawarra Cluster underway
- MAPs introduced
- Power and Trust protocol unrolled across the diocese
- Faithfulness in Service to be introduced in 2006
- Police Checks of clergy completed

2006

- Registry:
 - The Spirit
 - Outsourcing of investments to Myer
 - Work on Deanery to become Registry Office
- 1 January 2006 – Benetas took over St Laurence Court
- Andrew McCallum left St Luke’s
- MAPs introduced
- Visit of Robert Warren – 7 Marks of a Healthy Church
- Establishment of a Board of Ministry
- Faithfulness in Service adopted by Synod

2007

- Visit to the UK
- Learnings:
 - The importance of a Healthy Church
 - Leadership
 - The Diocese
 - Planning

- Children, Youth, Young Adults, Families
- Education and training
- Place- welcome, inviting
- Robert Warren's Healthy Church commended to parishes
 - Energised by faith
 - Outward looking focus
 - Se to find out what God wants
 - Face the cost of change and growth
 - Operates as a community
 - Makes room for all
 - Does a few things and does them well
- Archdeacon Bob Jackson from the UK visits the diocese

2008

- Post Lambeth – a report on the Lambeth Conference
- Jeff Westbrook – Registrar
- Fire at St Mary's Kangaroo Flat

2009

- Cathedral closure
- Introduction of 3 streams of ordination:
 - Stipendiary ministry
 - OLM
 - OPM
- 45% of Anglicans in Australia are in rural areas out of 3.7 million
- Our Place established after the bushfires
- Back to Church Sunday introduced
- Report by Claire Fountain – need to develop a strategic plan
- Anne Baker commenced 5 hours a week

2010

- Deanery visits to hear about MAPs
- New Horizons Welfare Services incorporated under Diocesan direction
- Anne Baker now 25 hours a week, appointed Registrar
- Bencourt Care up and running
- BCA commits to Strathfieldsaye initiative
- Architects appointed to design new church/parish centre at Kangaroo Flat
- Cathedral restoration: June – Premier John Brumby announced a contribution of \$750,000
- Diocesan Endowment established
- 10% tax on property sales introduced

2011

- Visit to UK
- Oxford Program
- Work on Cathedral commences – diocesan appeal
- Website updated
- Sale of All Saints introduced
- Ministry in Strathfieldsaye and Maiden Gully commences (Common Ground)
- New parish centre at Woodend opens

2012

- First Diocesan Convention – ‘Build My Church’
- The Cathedral restoration underway - \$750,000 from Brumby State Government
- Official launch of Cathedral Appeal – Open the Doors
- New Dean John Roundhill inducted
- Flood recovery: Carisbrook, Newbridge, Charlton, Rochester

2013

- Visit of Michael Harvey – Back to Church Sunday
- Introduction and commencement of Strategic Plan – Roles and Structure
 - Finances
 - Parishes and ministries
 - Personnel
 - Property and buildings
 - Communications
- Diocesan Convention
- Cathedral restoration stalls due to water in the building
- St Mary’s Kangaroo Flat – near completion
- Cranmer the Martyr opens in new building
- Attempt to re-badge diocesan op shops as ‘Giving and Living’ – fails
- Church closures:
 - Eastville, Yandoit, Laanecoorie
 - Kingower, Serpentine
 - Taradale
 - Bishop James Camp Stuart Mill sold
- New Bishporic Election Act passed at Synod

2014

- St Mary's Kangaroo Flat new church and parish centre consecrated
- Synod meets at Kangaroo Flat
- St Luke's – Anglicare Victoria merger: discussions completed. Merger formalised 1 July 2014
- Work on Cathedral interior gets underway

2015

- The Spirit gets a new look
- Clergy Conference at Mildura on conflict resolution
- Bishop visit the UK and speak at Church of England centenary service for Anzac Day at Coventry Cathedral
- Resolution at Synod:

That this meeting of Synod

- i) Reaffirms its strong commitment to three expressions of ordained clergy in the Diocese of Bendigo:
 - Stipendiary Clergy
 - Ordained Local Ministry (OLM)
 - Ordained Pioneer Ministry (OPM)
- ii) Asks the Bishop, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and with the Board of Ministry, to appoint a Working Group to investigate ways by which the Ministry Formation Programme may be more adequately resourced and strengthened.
These should include:
 - Budget
 - Staffing
 - Programme/curriculum
- iii) That a report be made to the Council of the Diocese by the end of 2015
- iv) That the Board of Ministry issue a revised policy statement on OLM in the Diocese of Bendigo and requests the Bishop to revise the booklet 'Ordained Ministry in the Diocese of Bendigo'.

2016

- New Registrar/General Manager Naomi Fountain commences work
- Sale of All Saints Old Cathedral site complete
- New model Professional Standards Act adopted by Synod
- Changes to the Parish Administration Act: 3 year terms for Parish Councils to be introduced
- New Bishop in Council Act: From Synod 2017 Bishop in Council will become 16 members
- Reconciliation Action Plan commenced

The Five Marks of Mission are:

- *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*
- *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
- *To respond to human need by loving service*
- *To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation*
- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*

- *Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101*