

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS
to the
52nd Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne
Wednesday 19 October 2016

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 first 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'

I pay tribute to those who have gone before us, from our beginning as a diocese in 1847 to the present day. Next year will be the 170th anniversary of the foundation of the diocese and of Charles Perry's consecration in Westminster Abbey on 29 June 1847. Who can imagine what Perry, one of the founders of synodical government in the Anglican Communion, might have imagined of the future as he arrived on the vessel Royal Mail Ship (RMS) Stag at the Port of Melbourne on 24 January 1848? We build our own lives as Christians on the life and witness of all those who in their day and circumstances shared and lived our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We meet as the first session of the 52nd Synod only days after the 160th anniversary of what has been called, "The first legally constituted Church Assembly in the British Empire" that commenced here in Melbourne on 16 October 1856. This Church Assembly was the forerunner of our Synod and was itself a pioneering innovation in church governance not just in Australia but one that has been determinative throughout worldwide Anglicanism.

We learned in August this year that the proposed referendum on constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians that had been scheduled for May 2017 was not going to proceed, with sometime in 2018 now being proposed as the earliest likely date. Indeed the Referendum Council appointed to advise the Prime Minister will not be reporting until the middle of 2017. I hope that this does not signify a reduction of commitment to bring this opportunity for important change before the Australian people. There has been a long history of this issue being deferred. You may recall that at the 1999 referendum two questions were considered and both were rejected by the electorate: one was the republic question, the other was to alter the Constitution of the Commonwealth to insert a preamble. Amongst other things the proposed preamble included the words, 'Honouring Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the nation's first people, for their deep kinship with their lands and for the ancient and continuing cultures which enrich the life of our country'. This proposal to insert a preamble gained only 39% support across the country. In the negotiations following the inconclusive election of 2010, Prime Minister Julia Gillard promised a referendum on constitutional recognition for Indigenous people before the 2013 election. This did not take place and when it came to the 2013 election the successful candidate for Prime Minister, Tony Abbott had taken to the election the commitment to release a draft proposal for constitutional change within a year of taking office, but once again the matters became bogged down and did not proceed. Further dates that received political support, when proposed, will soon pass, especially the

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highly symbolic date of 27 May 2017, the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum that gave the Commonwealth powers to make laws that were specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In my view it is highly likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people will want any constitutional change to confer on the Commonwealth treaty making powers with the First Nations people of Australia. This will be controversial and will need strong bipartisan commitment between government and opposition parties to gain the public's confidence. The recent experience of the way the plebiscite about same sex marriage has become a wedge rather than a unifying issue does not fill me with confidence about the capacity of our politicians to unite around the cause of constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Notwithstanding that concern it is essential that any apparent difficulties are not permitted to allow this important reform to drift indefinitely.

I do appreciate the efforts of members of our diocese to engage with the names of the four episcopates, Jumbunna, Marmingatha, Oodthenong and Monomeeth. I know that for some these words from the Woi Wurrung language will not sit easily on your tongue. Still it is good that we engage with the rich heritage of the Aboriginal people of this land and respect the heritage that is theirs and ours as the present day people who live on this country. These names when taken together, reaffirm our vision statement from Colossians 1.25, 'Making the word of God fully known'. *Marmingatha*, means "supreme being" and was used as the name for God by the first Christian Missionaries to the Wurundjeri people, *Jumbunna* means "proclamation", *Oodthenong* means "gathering", *Monomeeth* means "wellness and abundance". So the proclamation God's word gathers us and nurtures wellness and abundance.

Over the last year, the Anglican Church of Australia along with other churches and community groups has responded to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We have engaged with the Royal Commission's work at many levels both practical and spiritual. I am grateful for the continued work of the Royal Commission and its officers. Their work is now in its final phase having completed 44 Case Study hearings and over 6000 private sessions with survivors of abuse and their families. There are a further 1500 people still on the waiting list to provide their private testimony. Like me you have no doubt been appalled by the stories of abuse and the process failure that has so often followed. I continue to be impressed by the courage of all who have come forward to speak. Our Christian faith acknowledges that, in life, the good and the bad are often mixed together. Our faith calls us to look to a future where the pain of this life is gathered through the redemptive work of Christ and transformed to wholeness. While healing and wholeness await us in the future we need to be attentive to the opportunities for improving our own practice and especially our response to any who have suffered through the misconduct of clergy or church workers. My prayers are with all those who have suffered from abuse, wherever it has occurred.

The Commission has already made a number of important recommendations to Government. We have discussed these recommendations at the General Synod, Provincial and Diocesan level. We have a responsibility to act, to review and to improve. This Synod will consider Professional Standards legislation that has been developed in response to the Royal Commission's recommendations. As I speak as Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia on this unhappy past I have wanted to own the responsibility of the Church for all of our history, the true history, in both its positive and negative impacts. It is in this way, by truth telling, that we learn together and can find ways of celebrating the good and continuing to right the harm of the wrong. St John's Gospel is very clear about the liberating power of truth – in fact John 8.32 "The truth will set you free", is the motto of the Anglican Communion. On the way we have the blessing of knowing the encouragement of the good and the beautiful signs of that future, however these will not be seen without an acknowledgement and restoration of the painful history of failure that has been the focus of the Royal Commission's work.

In March 2015 the Provincial Council in Victoria initiated a working group to establish a uniform system of Professional Standards across the five dioceses of the Province. Bishop Andrew Curnow

was appointed as the Chairman of the Working Group and has guided it with assistance from representatives of each of the Victorian Dioceses. Our own Chancellor, Michael Shand, has once again played an instrumental role in framing the legislation that is before us.

The motivation behind the uniform system is to make it easier for survivors of sexual abuse to be able to access an independent process that gives them confidence of a fair hearing and outcome irrespective of the diocesan boundaries within Victoria. The synod of the Diocese of Bendigo has passed cognate legislation and I hope that the passage of the Uniform Professional Standards Bill through our synod will mean that we can combine with Bendigo and bring an independent Professional Standards Corporation into operation. We hope that soon the three other Victorian Dioceses will join this approach.

2.5 million Australians live in poverty, and around the world, more than a billion people are desperately poor. In Australia, a quarter of those in poverty, or more than 600,000, are children. Let those numbers sink in. In a country as prosperous as ours, almost 15% of our population are facing financial stress just trying to survive.

The implications of this are more than simply not having enough money. According to the research, those experiencing poverty are locked out of the choices and opportunities afforded to others in our society. For these people, poverty means insecurity, powerlessness, exclusion, and susceptibility to violence.

I am thankful to our Anglican Agencies, especially the Brotherhood of St Laurence for its work to eliminate poverty, to build an Australia that is free from poverty. This week marks Anti-Poverty Week and I commend to you a short YouTube clip that has been prepared to deepen understanding of poverty and its alleviation.

Climate change and its mitigation is a challenge the nations of the world have focused much attention on. Our own government, at the 2015 Paris Conference, signed up to reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions by about a quarter compared with 2005 levels over the next fifteen years. At every international meeting of Anglicans that I have attended, climate change is cited as a great evil whether from Sudan or Bangladesh or the Pacific. Climate change does not just threaten future harm to the livelihoods of some of the world's poorest people; I have been told by church leaders I have met that it is already having that impact. According to commentator Robert Manne, an effective response to climate change will need a global effort greater than World War II. Pope Francis has even called for a 'cultural revolution' in the relationship between humans and the natural world. The short political cycle works against an intelligent long-term approach. Even the recent power outages in South Australia have been used to argue against the growth of reliance on renewable energy. Nonetheless we should emphasise our theological insights that arise from the Doctrine of Creation and the Divine imperative of caring for the poor.

Last week at my Breakfast Conversation, Tim Costello and I discussed whether there is a new way possible for Australia to respond to the international refugee crisis. For years, Australia's refugee policy has staggered between two wicked problems: asylum seekers relying on people smugglers with all the appalling risks of death at sea, and the policy of successive governments that leaves refugees in indefinite detention in offshore detention centres. Is there a way through this impasse? I believe that there is. It is imperative that we break the nexus between indefinite detention and our opposition to people smugglers. We cannot leave children and their families in situations of despair and hopelessness. Their humanity along with ours is diminished by the continuation of these harsh policies. It needs people who share this concern to make their voice heard to our politicians.

Bishop Philip Huggins made a comment recently regarding the sign on our Cathedral that says, 'Let's fully welcome refugees'. It is the same sign that the members of Synod were photographed underneath two years ago. Bishop Philip said – *"Yes, it is iconic and the sign did warm hearts when it went up. But it has actually changed nothing in terms of Government policy. Moreover public opinion has hardened, as evident in the policies the major parties took to the last election ... and ... the suffering of children, like the one in our "iconic" image is unbearable - be they in war zones, refugee*

camps or detention centres. The wounds of the Risen Saviour bleed with the divine anguish as these children's lives are traumatised, robbed of any hope of childhood's enchantment ... advocacy requires persistent campaigning with fresh approaches. More is needed ... another sign is the least of it."

You will have heard my views on the Plebiscite to consider changes to the Marriage Act of the Commonwealth to provide for the marriage of same-sex partners. It seems now that this proposal is unlikely to proceed. We are too close to events to know how this will unfold since the government has been uncompromising in its view that if the plebiscite is not agreed to by the Parliament it will not reconsider the substantive question during this parliamentary term. For me the most disturbing part of the recent discussion has been the assumption that Australians are incapable of discussing this matter with civility. It is unfortunate that this rhetoric, that we are well accustomed to in party political debate, has been applied to a large part of the electorate who had reasonable expectations of participating themselves in the decision making on this important issue. Stereotyping public opinion ahead of an argument being advanced is unfortunate.

Preparations for the 52nd Synod began in earnest during January of this year. Archbishop in Council has received regular reports of the legislative agenda before the Synod and has seen the draft bills develop throughout the year. We have embarked on a systematic program of revising and updating synod legislation. The Parish Governance Act was an early product of that effort and now at this synod you have before you a bill for a new Cathedral Act and a bill for the Interpretation of Diocesan Legislation. You will be dealing with legislation that allows a lease for the Chapter House, already agreed to by the Cathedral Chapter and the Trustees of the Melbourne Anglican Trust Corporation, to be completed. You will be correct in thinking that should be able to be dealt with apart from legislation at synod but the further decision of the synod is a requirement of the trusts that bind the Cathedral land. The Chancellor will be suggesting a remedy to us which if agreed to by Synod and the Governor in Council will enable similar future approvals to be dealt with by Archbishop in Council.

A Synod Business Committee oversees the details of the arrangements, the agenda, the elections and all issues concerned with the smooth operation of the Synod. Your Part B Synod book contains reports from many diverse entities and areas of operation. They capture the life and ministry of our Diocese. I trust by now you have studied the business papers and reports to the Synod. These reports paint a rich picture of ministry across this Diocese and I am grateful for all those who have been responsible for writing them. Importantly, we have the first report to synod from the Melbourne Anglican Diocesan Corporation, a major recent initiative in our governance.

There are a number of important motions on the notice paper and undoubtedly others to be added in the call for notices of motion. I expect that for this session of the Synod it will be a learning curve for us all since we are operating, for the first time, under the new Standing Orders agreed to last year. Please familiarise yourself with them and give some space for us all to grow in familiarity as we settle into these new meeting rules. As you might expect the range of Synod motions reflects a variety of topical issues in our national conversation as well as those that are more relevant to the internal life of the church. Respectful debate which hears and understands the diversity of views that other synod members hold is both the aim of our Standing Orders and the lived history of earlier synods. I encourage each of us to appropriately express our views on the many matters before us, but also to listen to those views that are not our own. In my experience that always offers an opportunity for learning.

It has been good to sit with a biblical text – in this case Colossians 1.25 – as a concerted point of reflection over the period of our Vision and Directions journey. As I go around the Diocese I often hear stories of how this text – which has been summarised as ‘Making the word of God fully known’ has become a window into the call of God for local communities and ministry. I have often spoken of the need for us, across the breadth of the Diocese, to be more Mission focussed. When I say that and use the word ‘Mission’ I mean doing the things that Jesus sent us as his disciples to do. We proclaim the coming reign of God by telling people about the saving works of Jesus and bring others to the knowledge of Christ as Saviour and Lord. We are, of course, not just atomised individuals but as disciples of Jesus we are called into life as members of his body, the Church. Forming disciples as

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members of Christian community and then together doing the things that Jesus has commanded is at the heart of Mission. Mission must be about engagement in the world and with people who do not share our position of committed Christian belief.

'To make the word of God fully known' is to proclaim a mystery, once hidden, that has been made fully known to those who are the recipients of the letter to the Colossians, and to all who read and hear and respond to the epistle today.

In the immediate context of the exhortation to 'make the word of God fully known' (Col. 1.25) we meet notions of servanthood and ministry, both of which are linked to the wider concept of a household or family. Whereas the Greek word *diakonos*, rendered as 'servant' by the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in Col. 1.25, is more commonly translated as 'ministry' elsewhere, the notion of servanthood is, however, present in the wording that underlies what follows - 'according to God's commission.' Here the commission comes to the one who is a steward or administrator of the 'household' (*oikonomia*), in this context, the household of God. In the large Roman houses and estates, such a person was usually a slave. The word picture being constructed is, then, of one who is called to be a 'chief steward' to those who make up the household, or family, of God.

Rather than lament the sufferings and difficulties of the present, the passage begins with a paradoxical note of joy, for the 'chief steward' rejoices in affliction, not for the sake of suffering, but because the underlying belief is that the suffering is beneficial to the body of Christ, which is the Church (*ekklesia*). Here again the notion of servanthood is closely linked to that of ministry in the context of the household of God (the Church). Whilst difficulties and sufferings will be present, these are overwhelmed by the 'riches' of the glory of God.

The language turns, then, to that of a secret or 'mystery' (*mysterion*), now being unveiled or revealed (*apokalypsis*). This 'mystery' is defined as 'Christ in you,' and has, in the context of the letter to the Colossians, the tangible outcome of the inclusion of the Gentiles (non-Jews) into the household of God. The proclamation of the mystery of 'Christ in you' is genuinely inclusive, for its purpose is to lead people of every background ('everyone' occurs three times in Col. 1.28), to fullness and maturity in Christ.

Gathering up the intersecting themes of ministry as suffering servanthood that is beneficial to the whole church, having as its goal people of all backgrounds coming to Christ and being formed in his image, are the actual words of commissioning that come to the chief steward – 'to make the word of God fully known' (Col. 1.25). Here the key word is the verb *plērōma*, which has the sense of bringing something to fullness and completion. The earliest Christian statement of faith, that Jesus Christ is Lord, and Lord for, not a select few, but for all people, is the mystery once hidden, now being made fully known, and which in itself is complete and not lacking in any detail.

This is the basis of our journey of the Vision and Directions of the Diocese of Melbourne.

I launched the Vision and Strategic Directions in 2011 using the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion as an underlying framework. We have completed two, three-year cycles of the Vision and Directions over the periods of the 50th and 51st synods. It has become clear to me that our planning needs to be pushed out longer than three years and take in at least three synods or nine years. Whilst some initiatives have been able to commence others, especially where the acquisition of new property is concerned, remain thwarted by the rapid growth of property values. Just the property alone that we have looked at as potential church sites in the growth areas over recent months has been valued at in excess of \$2 million. Time will tell if there is to be a correction to this growth in prices, some commentators argue that this will occur but we still need to make our plans in the light of the known reality.

We want to be more effective as a Christian presence in the diversity of local communities across Melbourne and Geelong and think that we will see this by a number of outcomes:

- The proportion of local populations reached through Anglican ministry
- The proportion of local populations participation in congregations

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- The numbers of people who become disciples of Christ and full members of his Church
- Increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of congregations
- The age profile of congregations reflecting the age profile of the wider community
- Engagement in programs of mission and compassionate service.

You will see in a presentation during the Synod a summary of the Vision and Directions journey to date. There have been some significant gains with the Pilot Program work maturing into the Parish Renewal program, the growth of Multicultural Ministry and the rollout of the Wellbeing initiative. There is real vitality at the grassroots of local ministry. Parishes are using the possibilities that have opened up in the Parish Governance Act to network more effectively, Authorised Anglican Congregations are growing and there is ample evidence of worship and ancillary facilities being renewed, extended and made more fit for purpose.

There are over 90 clergy and people in ministry roles in our diocese who have received coaching support since 2011. Over 30 clergy are committed to leadership development (for themselves and their fellow clergy) through coaching. The program is easily accessible to our clergy at any stage of their vocation. The coaching program now works in tandem with Equipping Priests in Charge (EPIC) to ensure all new Priests in Charge receive their own coach (along with supervision) in the critical early years of their parish leadership.

We are serving new communities and opening doors for new opportunities for the people to believe in Christ and belong to his Church. We have all worked hard to build a culture of hope in our diocese.

The Mission shaping project that was identified as a key enabler of Mission has just about completed its first phase. Information has been collected and analysed, we have reaped the benefit of external reviewers examining our practice and a range of recommendations have come to Archbishop in Council. The second phase is the decision making that the Council of this 52nd synod will be called to make over the forthcoming months.

The Senior Leadership Team of the Bishops, Registrar and Executive Officer, has been closely engaged with the Strategic and Operational Reviews. We have devoted significant time on a number of occasions to take the plans of the last six years to a greater depth and detail. We went on Retreat on three occasions this year to collectively and prayerfully reflect on this journey. Looking at what we have achieved; what risks we have faced; and the lessons learned we then focussed on the future. What do we want to see in the next 3 – 6 – 9 years in our diocese? We reflected on Colossians 1.24-29 and the message that this epistle gives us today. Significantly for us as the Synod you have been presented with the results of these deliberations and the results of unfolding the Visions and Directions into a strategic plan. I intend to continue consultations during 2017 to develop this emerging strategic plan through interaction with a wide cross section of people in the diocese.

In this next phase of the Vision and Directions we are identifying four Strategic Directions and 22 different outcomes that arise from them. As you will see the strategic directions are:

1. To be a compelling and outward-looking Christian presence in our communities
2. To reach across boundaries of human division to serve our communities and proclaim Christ
3. To be open to the Holy Spirit in transforming lives to be mature in Christ
4. To use all the energy that God powerfully inspires to better manage our human and capital resources.

Let me describe for a moment the size of the challenge we face with the rapid population growth of Melbourne and Geelong. We currently have 205 Parishes and Authorised Anglican Congregations worshipping at 262 church buildings as well as further sites that are not owned by the Church.

The population of Greater Melbourne is now 5.2 million but is predicted to grow to 10 million by 2050. The city of Greater Geelong stands to increase from 235,000 to 321,000 in the next 20 years. Present figures for Melbourne and Geelong suggest on average that one Parish serves a population of 26,500. Extrapolation from that average suggests we would need 389 places of worship to serve the projected population growth; an increase of 184 by 2050. It is not hard to see the scale of the task we face. Just taking those numbers a bit further and applying a notional cost of \$5 million to establish land and buildings for even a modest parish church operation means that we would need a capital investment of just under \$1 billion in today's money to double our presence over the next 35 years. Every analysis that we make points to the importance of managing our financial resources effectively so that we can do more than just chip away at this mountain of growth potential.

I return again to the Parish Renewal program and the coaching element within it. A number of clergy have said, and it is a very powerful statement, that they would not have continued in ministry were it not for the availability of the coaching program and the coaching they received. In partnership with the Family Systems training, the coaching program is contributing to a Diocesan culture that supports the flourishing of the ordained vocation by growing leadership capability. There has been greater growth in parishes where Parish Renewal programs are supported by coaching (on average about 5% growth over 2 years). This may seem modest but we should celebrate that this initiative of the first iteration of Vision and Directions is proving fruitful.

I am pleased to announce that a new campus of Hume Anglican Grammar will be established in a soon to be unveiled residential development off Donnybrook Road, about 10 kilometres from Mt Ridley. The doors will open to students at the start of the 2019 academic year. The campus will be developed in stages, with early Primary years offered from the start and the roll out of later years through to Year 12 thereafter. The existing Mt Ridley campus and the new campus will operate alongside each other as parts of the one school. There will be one school on two sites. This is a great example of collaboration and mission, where an Anglican school: Hume Anglican Grammar, the Anglican Diocese Schools Commission, the Diocese, the Anglican Development Fund, the developer and local government worked together as part of urban redevelopment. This campus will support the growth of Hume Anglican Grammar and allow for an additional 1200 students to experience the ethos and traditions of an Anglican education.

A significant focus as outlined at the previous year's Synod, was for a clergy wellbeing program to be rolled out across the Diocese as part of our desire to foster and build a culture of hope, and to invest in our people and especially those at the forefront of our mission and ministry – our clergy. Bishop Brad Billings has added this to the responsibilities he was already overseeing in theological education, and has sought the assistance of the Reverend Andrew Bunting to work alongside him in the wellbeing program as it takes shape.

I am pleased that, during the course of this year, a number of initiatives have been put in place and taken root across the Diocese and among our clergy. A philanthropically funded Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all clergy of the Diocese and their immediate families is now available. This provides three fully funded sessions with a qualified counsellor, with the possibility of referral for further assistance. We had a wellbeing day which included physical health checks at each of the three clergy conferences this year. Professional development opportunities for deanery groups, like the seminar on 'pastoral care in difficult circumstances' held in the Essendon deanery in August, have commenced.

As part of the program, Bishop Brad and Andrew have visited deaneries during the course of the year to gain the input of the clergy on a deanery-by-deanery basis. Further training and development will be available in 2017 and Area Deans will be given more opportunities for professional development in their role.

As I said in 2014, at its heart, seeking to be mission shaped is about the truth that the Good News of Christ is as necessary for the people who are not in our churches, or any church, as it is for those

who freely acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of their life. It is to believe that God intends the renewed relationship that is made possible through Jesus to be available to people everywhere.

The challenge of resourcing for mission remains ever present; as I am sure it does within the parishes and communities that you represent. We are called to be wise stewards and I have appreciated the efforts to mission shape our budget. We are seeing some green shoots from this work which begins with a better understanding of priority and resourcing. In some cases that has meant the abandonment of habitual structures and roles in favour of a different approach, one which is more focussed on local context, local need, ministry and resourcing. We are investing in our Archdeacons as missional leaders, in clergy wellbeing as a key priority and in building communities of practice within our support ministries as we seek to make children and families, youth and multi-cultural ministries a key foundation of growth.

Our work in Parish Partnerships, alongside the agencies of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Anglicare is beginning to bear real fruit and I am thankful for the continued work of Archdeacon Jan Crombie and the CEOs and Boards of the agencies in support of our collective goal of being part of "harnessing the good of communities through being networked within them" to quote the Brotherhood of St Laurence Executive Director Tony Nicholson. The simple principle that 'we are much stronger together' is one which has resonance as we try to tackle the challenge of growth and the lack of social infrastructure within new and renewed populations.

I think that you will agree that the challenges and opportunities for growth of our work and ministry as a Diocese are significant. We already have some effective mechanisms in place that assist the vitality of parish ministry as well as diocesan ministry generally. The Anglican Development Fund is a very important means that we have to support initiative. At the moment there are 96 parishes with a loan account and I have been pleased to dedicate a number of buildings that have been constructed with the support of an ADF loan. Because the ADF offers a discounted loan rate that is made possible through the investment of church members like you and me there has been a benefit in terms of saved interest of \$265,000 in addition to a direct grant of \$250,000 that ADF makes to the Church Establishment Development Fund.

The Diocese has an untied endowment of a little under \$35 million, a significant increase in our resources compared to even ten years ago. This is not a large amount of endowment compared with some other comparable dioceses here and overseas or compared with other Australian denominations. Nonetheless we need to keep growing our diocesan financial capacity to generate resources for mission and to continue our policy of keeping assessment growth from parishes at or below CPI. We are, of course, experiencing an environment of much lower investment return than we experienced in those pre-Global Financial Crisis Days.

I think that we have the opportunity for raising the tide of our resourcing for local ministry and wider ministry at the same time by a more effective use of diocesan property resources. I will briefly touch on three examples where this is already happening in the hope that it stirs the possibility of other initiatives in your mind. Each originated in very different eras, the Richmond Church Lands Trust is a creature of the 19th Century, St John's Camberwell developed some of the parish land in the late 1990s and the St Luke's South Melbourne development took place in the early 2000s. Over the last ten years the combined benefit of those three commercial property initiatives has been over \$11 million for local mission across the five parishes concerned and over \$4.5 million to the Diocesan budget.

It is part of our history, and thus irreversible, but I must confess that I often wonder where we would now be placed financially if we had retained ownership of the original 5 acre St James Old Cathedral site bounded by William and Little Collins Streets rather than selling it in 1913. I'm sure that it was used for good purposes at the time, which included the endowing of the newly formed country dioceses of Victoria, but we lost the advantage of being an intergenerational owner and receiving the benefit of the well attested increase in value of CBD land. Our Property Committee does look at

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this question when it comes to the managing and development of church land and I hope that we can generate more finances for mission by further intelligent use of our property resources.

I also hope that the Melbourne Anglican Foundation, our philanthropic arm for resourcing diocesan ministry and mission succeeds in growing its contribution to the work of the church. As well as applications to philanthropic trusts, the Foundation receives tax deductible donations for a range of parish and diocesan activity and intends to expand its appeal for legacies and bequests.

There are a number of personnel changes that I want to touch briefly upon here, it is unfortunately not possible to be exhaustive in detailing all of the changes that happen across this dynamic diocese.

Maureen Cronin will be concluding her nearly eighteen years of work with the diocese just after synod. For the past six years she has been the Deputy Returning Officer for our synod and those of you who have been synod members before will recognise Maureen once again hard at work on the minutes and resolutions just below the lectern. Maureen has been the personal assistant for five Registrars and I am told by many people that she is the preferred 'go to' person for information in the Diocesan Office! On behalf of us all I wish Maureen a happy retirement in Bendigo.

Naomi Nayagam will be concluding her contract with the Diocese at the end of this year. In the 19 months that she has been working as Executive Officer / Research and Development she has brought some considerable and unique process skills to bear on the mission shaping project that saw her work as the resource primary liaison person with the review teams that have looked at Governance, Anglican Funds, Information Technology & Communication as well as Property. In addition she has played a pivotal role in bringing the conversations of the Senior Leadership Team to life in the form of the Vision and Directions Strategy for the period ahead. I want to personally thank Naomi for the work that she has done in these reviews, her part on the development of our forward strategy and for the support to my office through her role as Executive Officer.

Bishop Paul White resigned from his Jumbunna Episcopate responsibilities in May and agreed to stay on in a part time capacity as an Assistant Bishop to develop our growth area strategy. This work is in its early days but I am confident that Bishop Paul will bring to bear on this task his extensive experience of the Diocese of Melbourne and his passion to see the church's ministry grow.

The Council of the Diocese concurred with the appointment of Bishop Brad Billings and Bishop designate Paul Barker at the March meeting of Council. Bishop Brad was consecrated a bishop on 30 April and has hit the ground running which has included covering some of the Jumbunna Episcopate responsibilities. His principal role has been the development of the Theological Education and Wellbeing work of the Diocese, what in other organisations is often called 'People and Culture' that also includes a new Human Resources function that we added after the last synod.

The Reverend Dr Paul Barker is close to concluding his ministry as a CMS missionary in South and South-East Asia as visiting lecturer in Old Testament, Biblical Theology and Homiletics, and as the regional coordinator for Asia for Langham Preaching and Langham Scholar Care. He has ministered in parishes here most recently as Vicar of Holy Trinity Doncaster, and has served as an Area Dean, Examining Chaplain and Archdeacon. He will take up his new responsibility for the Jumbunna Episcopate after his consecration on 12 November this year.

Thank you all! I single out my Episcopal team, Bishops Genieve, Paul, Brad and Philip; Bishop John Harrower in his work as bishop assisting the Primate, the Registrar and General Manager, Ken Spackman; the Senior Staff team of Archdeacons; Archbishop in Council including the Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor and Advocate; the Registry 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.

What each of you do in your parishes and authorised Anglican congregations is of course the real public presence of the church's ministry. Committed membership, spiritual worship and outreach to

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those who are not part of the church is at the heart of ministry and mission. May we all be encouraged and enlivened for the daily living of our discipleship as a follower of Christ.

Thank you 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. Thank you too for those amongst us who have returned and bring the experience of some or many synods with them.

Let us approach our Synod with the same spirit that we see at work in the letter to the Colossians, where difficulties and sufferings are overwhelmed by the 'riches' of the glory of God.