
Around the Well

The Newsletter of Concerned Catholics
Tasmania

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From the Chair of CCT

At the beginning of each year, we reflect upon what has gone before, where we are now, and imagine what might come next.

At this point last year, we were in the midst of making submissions about the Synod as Pope Francis asked. In the previous year, we observed the exit of President Trump and the appointment of President Biden.

This year has begun with a rush. Pope Benedict and Cardinal Pell are no longer with us. Ahead, the *Statement from the Heart* and a referendum are moving to centre stage. **Whilst the Statement has been endorsed by the Fifth Plenary Council**, our bishops have been slow to speak about the Statement or the referendum in the public square.* We have written to Archbishop Julian about an archdiocesan response.

Please read the Statement as a sign of our respect for our indigenous sisters and brothers. It is a generous offer from them. Yet we continue to fail them. You can view a [version with pictures and graphics](#) or a [plain text](#) version.

Thank you to all who responded to our brief questionnaire asking for feedback on potential CCT events in 2023. We were heartened by the positive comments and are taking note of the suggestions for alternative ways of doing things. There is a summary of the outcomes on Page 4.

I also alert you to the box on page 3 inviting expressions of interest in joining the CCT Committee.

The Committee's role is to be of service to you and represent you in our shared hope for local and universal Church renewal.

Thank you for your support.

Kim Chen

* as we go to print, [CathNews](#) of 17/02 reports that Archbishop Coleridge is "strongly committed" to an Indigenous Voice.

www.concernedcatholicstasmania.org



The Statement from the Heart Lenten Program

From Kim Chen:

"Burnie Wynyard Parish is running an ecumenical Lenten program in conjunction with the Burnie Uniting Church with the Uluru Statement from the Heart being the subject matter.

On 19 March Rev Glenn Loughrey will be speaking at the three weekend Masses. He is a canon at the Melbourne Anglican Cathedral and an aboriginal man.

Burnie Uniting Church Minister, Susan Malthouse, is helping and the program being used is that of the Uniting Church.

We will be led by retired medical practitioner, Megan Robinson. "

In light of the coming referendum, perhaps other parishes could consider such a focus. Glenn's 2022 McKinney Lecture Presentation *Unpacking the Statement from the Heart* emphasises the centrality of justice and healing to an authentic response.

Page 1

Recent developments in CCT

The Committee of CCT met by Zoom on Monday 6th February, with the following discussion and actions:

Committee Membership The Chair welcomed Cathy Sullivan to her first meeting of the committee. The terms of all members of the CCT Committee (except Cathy Sullivan) conclude at the AGM around May this year. The Constitution of CCT allows for up to 12 members.

Members are invited to put themselves forward for appointment, or to suggest others whom they consider to be suitable for the role. See Page 3 of this newsletter for details on how to nominate yourself or someone else for the committee,

Senior Secondary Religious Education Program There have been concerns expressed about the appropriateness of the proposed senior secondary Religious Education program. Concerns include the proposal for students to study this program in addition to their full-time load of accredited senior secondary courses, which already includes religious studies courses taught in each Catholic school. There are also questions about the nature of the content, its effectiveness in bringing the message of the Gospel in an engaging way to young people, and the possible negative impact on senior secondary enrolments in Catholic education. It was noted late last year that the implementation of the program has been delayed to 2024.

Voice to Parliament Kim Chen has written to the Archbishop regarding the Plenary Council decision and ACBC support for the *Statement from the Heart*, enquiring what actions have been taken in the Archdiocese to develop awareness of the Statement and the Referendum considering an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

2023 Plans A subcommittee proposal for a short sharp questionnaire to canvass member thoughts by February 13th was implemented. Details on a 2023 program will be distributed shortly.

Campaign for Refugees Vin Hindmarsh notes that working with the new Federal Immigration Minister, Andrew Giles, has proved positive. There has been some encouraging news recently. The sweeping changes to policy announced on Feb 13 are detailed by the Refugee Council of Australia at www.refugeecouncil.org.au/media-releases.

Nuncio Following informal discussions with the Nuncio in December, the Chair has written to him requesting an appointment to hear of, and have some input to, the archbishop appointment process.



The Synod cannot be viewed with a blind eye to the abuse crisis.

“Abuse by priests and the hierarchical cover-up were a breach of trust, an unprecedented betrayal, at a sacramental level.” writes Tom Roberts, former editor of National Catholic Reporter. He concludes his article, which can be read [here](#), by posing this question to Church hierarchy:

“What would you, members of the hierarchy, require of a group of powerful laypeople who had conspired to engage in the worst public betrayal of the church in modern history, smeared the name of Catholicism globally in an unprecedented way, done unspeakable violence repeatedly to the most vulnerable, engaged in elaborate strategies to conceal the sin, drained the church of credibility in much of the world, raided its treasury to pay for silence, and now wished everyone would just move on? Ponder that, bishops and cardinals, and let us know what you come up with. Without your answer, the corrosive effect of scandal proceeds and synodality is an empty exercise.”

Next Meeting – your input? The next Committee meeting is on 14th March, 2023. Ideas to hello@concernedcatholicstasmania.org.au.

CCT Committee Membership

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest are sought **by March 10th** from CCT members who would like to nominate for committee membership. Alternatively, you may like to suggest someone else for the committee (we can approach them if necessary).

Please send nominations to the Secretary sueehyslop@gmail.com. If nominations exceed positions (12), a process for election will be put in place in readiness for the AGM in May.

Office bearers will be elected by the new committee.



How can we be guided in our consideration of the Voice?

It may be helpful to consider this statement from our [Plenary Council](#):

“The Fifth Plenary Council:

a. says sorry to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in and beyond the Church for the part played by the Church in the harms they have suffered;

b. commits to walk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in continuing to work towards recognition, reconciliation and justice;

c. joyfully receives and accepts the recommendations contained in the NATSICC position paper “Embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Life of the Catholic Church”;

d. endorses the Uluru Statement from the Heart and encourages engagement with processes for implementing the statement, including local, regional, and national truth-telling efforts.”

Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform (ACCCR) Report

Convocation The online Convocation held on Feb 2nd featured Susan Pascoe, Australian lay representative at the Frascati pre-Synod meeting in Italy. Archbishop Tim Costello opened the Convocation and New Zealander Christine Reymer, founder of *Be the Change Aoteroa/New Zealand* (ACCCR Member Group) moderated. Panelists included Francis Sullivan, Chair of *Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn*, Grace Wrakia, PNG and Solomon Islands lay representative for the Synod, and Patricia Gemmell, National Team member for *The Grail* and organiser for *Women Preach*.

Over 2000 registered for the Convocation - a written report is being prepared and will be forwarded as soon as available.

The Convocation complemented the sell-out events with Synod Under-Secretary, Sr Nathalie Becquart held in early February in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney. It pre-dated the Continental Catholic Bishops of Oceania meeting in Suva. This meeting included considering the Continental Synod document prepared by the 22 representatives from the five Oceania Dioceses.

ACCCR (cont.)

Review of ACCCR The ACCCR Reps Committee asked Member Groups to provide comments/feedback on the Draft Review Report to Kevin Liston by February 9th. The CCT Committee provided comment. Responses will be considered at the Reps Meeting on Feb 23rd for possible adoption as a way forward.

Questionnaire Results

We thank the 87 respondents to the survey for sharing their thoughts and hopes with us. Your contributions have given us great confidence about the road ahead in 2023.

Question 1 Respondents were asked to select three topics for CCT gatherings from the following (with percentages noted):

1. Uluru Statement from the Heart and the referendum on the Voice; (65%),
2. Progress on the Synod on Synodality and the Continental response; (71%)
3. Pope Francis' challenging message for a caring and compassionate Church reflecting Christ's message in the world today; (73%), and
4. Time for reflection on who we are as Catholics in Tasmania at this time (a guided discussion on matters affecting us in our church and ways to provide comfort, encouragement and nourishment of the spirit within) (79%).

Twenty one respondents added comments, many relating to the 4th choice, including concerns about the conservative nature of the Archdiocese and the need for spiritual nourishment/faith education.

Relevant to Pope Francis' call for a more caring and compassionate Church, concerns were expressed for LGBTQI Catholics, refugees and the pastoral care of the aged. There were calls for evangelisation addressing the needs

of disenchanted Catholics and for the Church to be more ecumenical.

One comment suggested that information about the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* is available from other sources, which may explain why this topic is of less concern. A comment on the Synod referred to the opportunity for CCT members to practise the process of synodality at future gatherings.

Question 2 sought guidance as to how best to address the needs of CCT members and friends. Of the 52 responses, most expressed gratitude for the work of the committee and some provided advice. Themes were:

1. Gratitude for commitment to Christ's vision and an ongoing challenge to be a prophetic voice;
2. Gratitude for the information provided via emails, newsletters and the website;
3. A call to continue to advocate for leadership reform, accountability, and transparency in our Archdiocese; and
4. A call to continue to model synodal church gatherings at regional levels and in small groups in geographical areas.

There was a high degree of agreement on the role played by CCT in the Archdiocese although there were variations on suggested approach. For example, one preference was to avoid controversy, while others called for boldness.

In conclusion, the survey is both affirming and helpful in the advice it has provided regarding recommended activities and how they are offered to ensure maximum participation. It affirms the role of CCT to advocate for Tasmanian Catholics in the Archdiocese and to provide a means for spiritual nourishment.