

# A process of renewal – Moving Forward Together

*“To hear God’s People and empower them to participate fully in Christ’s Mission”*

- Diocesan Pastoral Plan

For at least 25 years the people of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle have been actively engaged in a process of pastoral planning. This overview points to key moments in that journey.

The most critical time in this development was the 1992/93 Diocesan Synod which attempted to capture the imagination of the Second Vatican Council’s understanding of the nature and mission of church. Council documents emphasised the church as a community of God’s people, a pilgrim people, journeying towards salvation, constantly in need of renewal and conversion and always called to be a sign and a sacrament of the unity of all people with God.

Our diocesan theological principles, contained in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, capture the basis for our expression of church that is alert to a changing world. At the same time the plan called for the establishment of the Council-Assembly-Team model of pastoral planning and shared decision-making at parish, regional, deanery and diocesan levels. Since 1992 there have been assemblies, council and team meetings at all levels in the diocese with the intention of hearing God’s people and making real the mission of Christ here and now.

Continuing the intention of the Diocesan Synod, the Bishop, along with the Diocesan Executive, the Council of Priests and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, once again wishes to engage in conversation with the People of God. As we continue to grow and develop in our understanding of our faith we

are challenged to uncover our way of living this faith in relationship with God, each other and our world so that our church remains relevant and true to the signs of our times.

**Therefore, we invite you to a Diocesan Gathering on the evening of 5 November and on Saturday 6 November 2010.**

In 2009 Bishop Michael established a Diocesan Stewardship Committee, to provide a framework to facilitate planning across all Parishes, Agencies (Catholic Schools and CatholicCare) and the Chancery. After 12 months the committee produced a document called **Moving Forward Together - The Stewardship Plan**. We hope that this framework which uses The Five Foundations, embedded in Acts 2: 42-47, will provide the whole diocese with a tool for planning at each level of engagement.

## Diocesan Stewardship Planning Framework

What shapes our planning framework?



The Five Foundations (Acts 2: 42-47)

- Identity and Community**
  - fosters Christian community, hospitality, welcome and respect... - an identity grounded in "communio"
- Worship and Prayer**
  - gathers people for prayer, sacrament and liturgical celebration... is Eucharistic in life and worship
- Formation and Education**
  - facilitates spiritual growth and promotes empowerment through education and formation
- Mission and Outreach**
  - engages people in the transformation of society-outreach through mercy and justice-to build the kingdom of God
- Leadership and Structure**
  - fosters effective Christian leadership, communication, organisational and maintenance structures

Underpinning this framework, and therefore local plans, are several key documents and guidelines – Scripture, Canon Law, Vatican II Documents, the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, Tradition, Church Teachings, Stewardship Principles and the people and community’s lived experience. It is envisaged that the principle of subsidiarity would be maintained or strengthened by using this planning framework.

The theology of *Communio and Missio* gives our **Stewardship Plan** its heart and soul. We gather around the table of the Lord (Eucharist) to be nourished and to be sent out into the world; “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” This is the very essence of who we are as Catholics.

It is through our Five Foundations and with Stewardship as our response that we bring to life the Vision of the Diocese:

**To hear God’s people and empower them to participate fully in Christ’s mission.**

The **Stewardship Plan** seeks to offer:

- a vision of church life and a spirituality that gives each of us a meaningful way of ‘being church’ in the world today
- guidance in making the Diocesan Pastoral Plan relevant and accessible to parishes, chancery, agencies and religious congregations
- collaborative and participative approaches that are based on relationships which value openness and trust.

In order to prepare for this Gathering a series of articles will appear in *Aurora* over the next six months for you to think about, discuss in your circles of support and respond to when ready. It

is also our intention to attend local meetings (region or parish) with the view to breaking open a planning framework, **Moving Forward Together**.

In the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero,

*“we will accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise which is God’s work... We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.”*

We will be seeking responses to this planning framework and other proposals using a number of communication tools including small groups, local gatherings, written submissions, etc, which we will inform you about via our weekly diocesan update or in the next edition of *Aurora*. It is our intention to enable all who wish to participate in the conversations to do so as we prepare for the Diocesan Gathering in November.

*The Diocesan Pastoral Council*

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

# The Diocesan Update



Would you like to know about Diocesan events before they happen?

Are you interested in hearing news relating to our local and Australian Church?



Would you like to become more involved in the wider Diocesan community and participate in faith formation and community based events?

Each week the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle publishes the Diocesan Update and it is sent to each parish on Tuesdays. The Update is designed to gather all information, news and events of interest together in one document that can then be accessed by all in our community.



*Subscribers to the Diocesan Update receive an email each Tuesday with a link to the Diocesan Update on the website.*

If you would like to receive the Diocesan Update personally each week in your inbox please P 4979 1111 or [E maree.lawrie@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:maree.lawrie@mn.catholic.org.au)

# Overview of processes leading to change and renewal in the diocese

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| <b>2010</b>      | Diocesan Assembly - "Moving Forward Together"  |
| <b>2008-2010</b> | Consultative Process on Stewardship Planning   |
| <b>2008</b>      | Establishment of Diocesan Stewardship Committee  |
| <b>2007-2008</b> | Stewardship Forums   |
| <b>2008</b>      | Focus Group Meetings   |
| <b>2007</b>      | Diocesan Assembly - "It's Time to Celebrate"   |
| <b>2006-2007</b> | Working Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers for the Harvest</li> <li>• Evangelisation</li> <li>• Faith Formation</li> <li>• Sacrament of Reconciliation</li> <li>• Assembly Representation</li> </ul> |
| <b>2004-2005</b> | Diocesan Assembly - "Towards the Dawn"   |
| <b>2003-2004</b> | Regional Assemblies in 10 Pastoral Regions of the Diocese  |
| <b>2000</b>      | Diocesan Assembly to consider "New Wine into Fresh Wineskins"<br>Pastoral Planning Report  |
| <b>1998-1999</b> | Inter-Parish Strategic Planning  |
| <b>1997</b>      | Diocesan Assembly - Review of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, and the Permanent Diaconate, and Preparing Parishes for change consultations   |
| <b>1996</b>      | Discussion Paper - "Principles and Models for Restructuring Parishes"  |
| <b>1995</b>      | Diocesan Assembly to discuss the Diocesan Policy on the Sacraments of Initiation   |
| <b>1995</b>      | Bishop Michael Malone becomes Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle   |
| <b>1995</b>      | Retirement of Bishop Leo Clarke  |
| <b>1995</b>      | Renaming of Diocese to Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, and transfer of seat of Diocese to Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton  |
| <b>1992</b>      | Diocesan Pastoral Plan - First Diocesan Synod to involve lay and religious - adopted first Diocesan Pastoral Plan  |
| <b>1988</b>      | Plan for alternative models of parish staffing   |
| <b>1985</b>      | Council of Priests initiated diocesan pastoral planning  |
| <b>1976</b>      | Consecration of Bishop Leo Clarke  |
| <b>1975</b>      | Death of Bishop John Toohey  |

**2010**

- 42 Parishes
- 80 Churches
- 55 Diocesan Priests
- 10 Religious Priests
- 7 Brothers
- 228 Sisters
- 11 High Schools
- 45 Primary Schools
- 17,248 School Students
- 153,812 Catholics

**1990**

- 53 Parishes
- 92 Churches
- 88 Diocesan Priests
- 19 Religious Priests
- 15 Brothers
- 313 Sisters
- 11 High Schools
- 51 Primary Schools
- 15,794 School Students
- 115,327 Catholics

**1970**

- 57 Parishes
- 170 Churches
- 115 Diocesan Priests
- 19 Religious Priests
- 52 Brothers
- 561 Sisters
- 12 High Schools
- 62 Primary Schools
- 15,728 School Students
- 87,662 Catholics