

## Episcopal Church in the Philippines visit: highlights, insights and inspirations



**"You're so tall!" Bishop Sarah Plowman, husband Darius Cartwright, and Rev'd Juliana Bate chat with students at All Saints Mission Incorporated School who are fascinated by Darius's height!**

Over 10 days in March, I had the amazing opportunity to journey through some of the most remote communities in the Philippines, hosted by the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP); their development program, the [E-CARE Foundation](#); and, the [Anglican Board of Mission](#) (ABM). Travelling with ABM team member Meagan Schwarz and St John's Anglican College Chaplain, The Rev'd Juliana Bate and my husband Darius, our purpose was to visit community development projects supported by ABM and E-CARE, as well as Anglican schools in the Dioceses of North Central Philippines, Santiago and North Luzon.

Our recent visit to the Philippines was 10 days of travel, inspiration and joy as we shared fellowship, worship and learning with bishops, clergy in schools and parishes, community co-operative workers and faithful Anglicans in as many settings as we had days on the ground.

We began our visit by attending the installation of the new Prime Bishop of the ECP, The Most Rev'd Nestor Poltic in the Cathedral of St Mary and St John in Quezon City. From Manila, we drove north to Baguio City, where we visited the Cathedral of the Resurrection and [Easter Weaving Room Inc](#), where local women have been creating fabric garments (such as vestments) in the traditional Igorot weaving patterns Indigenous to that region (for hundreds of years) since 1908. Many clergy in the ACSQ will have received stoles from ABM at their ordinations — these are made at Easter Weaving Room. So it was just wonderful for me to see where these beautiful colourful items are made by hand.

Then it was further up into the mountains, to Sagada, where we met with principals and senior leaders from three Anglican schools and saw two other E-CARE development projects. We worshipped with students at St Mary's School and discussed the challenges and joys of growing strong Anglican schools. From there we headed east through the mountains to Santiago, where we visited [St Mark's Children's Learning Centre](#), a project supported by the Archbishop's ABM November Appeal in 2024. This small school is growing strongly, providing a distinctive Christian education for students in the Anglican tradition. Finally, we visited St Paul's Memorial School in Balbalasang, a remote community where the Anglican school and parish provide a spiritual home for the people of the village and surrounding area. Being a boarding school, St Paul's meets the needs of many families looking for a Christian education with all the hallmarks we expect from an Anglican school — strong values, high-quality educational outcomes and a nurturing and loving community centred on Christ.

I got to spend time with four of the ECP Bishops, which was a particular joy for me because they demonstrated their own personality and giftedness in the way they carried out their duties. It seems that playing the guitar is quite common among bishops in the Philippines — good news for Bishop Cam and me — and our final night in Northern Luzon included a singalong where we Australians did not disappoint, but we couldn't quite match Bishop Hilary's rendition of "God Must Be a Cowboy"!

There were several things that really stood out to me during our visit.

Wherever we went, every church, school and gathering place proudly displayed the [Five Marks of Mission](#) of the Anglican Communion. These have become the ECP's unifying feature and every person involved in ministry, from community development workers, to finance staff, to clergy and lay leaders was able to refer to them as their guiding framework for ministry and mission. This had a profound effect on me. It seems so simple to be able to articulate a shared understanding about "What are we here for?", but when I saw it lived as well as spoken and put on the wall, it was clear that this is both a unifying and an energising living missional statement!

The second thing I noticed is the way in which Anglican education is emerging as a new focus for ministry, and women are emerging as key leaders in this mission of the Church — as chaplains and principals. The role of a distinctive school chaplain is a new one in the ECP, as local parish clergy have filled the role in the past. While they were unsure about their understanding and readiness to step into school chaplaincy, these new chaplains are forging ahead with great heart and faithfulness — and their bishops have trusted them with the responsibility of this, showing a great hope and vision for what Anglican school ministry can and should be about.

Thirdly, there is a sense of urgency around creation care. The communities we visited rely on the weather for a successful livelihood and many people spoke of the challenge of changing weather patterns and the increasing frequency of typhoons — up to 25 each season! They see the direct value of utilising solar energy, planting trees and caring for water catchments. E-CARE sees this as one of their key pillars for development and works alongside local communities to support their creation care efforts.

Finally, I noticed that among the ECP communities, there was a great sense of hope and optimism — a spirit of "let's have a go", which takes courage and faith in God's providence. The ECP is a relatively new province. It was admitted as the Mission District of the Philippine Islands by the Episcopal Church in the USA (ECUSA) in 1901. The Church became known as the Philippine Episcopal Church from 1937, before becoming an autonomous church and province of the Anglican Communion in 1990. Through a shared vision and desire to be self-supporting, it intentionally grew beyond needing any financial

support from ECUSA. This means that, being only 35 years old in one sense, there is a spirit of “youthful exuberance” where trying new things is necessary and normal, and any failures are seen as learning experiences.

The context in the Philippines is, of course, quite different from ours here in Southern Queensland, and I was humbled to observe the determination and joy with which the ECP communities do so much with relatively little. I was overjoyed to see the difference that our ABM November Appeal is making in the life of the students at St Mark’s Children’s Learning Centre in Santiago. I was blessed to worship and journey with each and every ECP member and E-CARE, and I thank God that we could share the journey with The Rev’d Juliana and Meagan.

**Author’s note:** You can still [donate](#) to the Archbishop’s ABM November Appeal to support the mission of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

**Reflections • Wednesday 28 May 2025 • By The Ven. Richard Gowty, John Barrett, Laura Commins, Anne Leach, John Leach**

## Reflections on the recent consecration of St Augustine’s, Palmwoods — 100 years after it opened



**Archbishop Jeremy Greaves consecrated St Augustine's, Palmwoods at the church's centenary celebrations on Sunday, 25 May 2025**

One hundred years after St Augustine’s, Palmwoods was opened on 23 May 1925, Archbishop Jeremy consecrated the church on Sunday at a wonderful community event. Five Anglicans with long-term connections to the parish share their reflections on their church community and the consecration-centenary gathering.



## **The Ven. Richard Gowty — Former Priest-in-Charge of St Augustine's, Palmwoods**

My connection to St Augustine's began when I was rector of St Mark's, Buderim and Archdeacon of the Sunshine Coast. Following my retirement, I accepted the invitation to become part-time Priest-in-Charge of St Augustine's, a ministry which extended to some eight years.

During this time, the Palmwoods area began a period of substantial growth. While the congregational growth was small, the parish's influence in Palmwoods was quite exceptional. Ministries for retirement communities, Palmwoods State School and the chamber of commerce were much appreciated and provided a worthwhile Christian presence in the wider community.

The establishment of a parish op shop over the road from the iconic Palmwoods Hotel was a landmark achievement that provided the parish with a healthy income, while more importantly becoming a much-loved centre for residents and visitors to fellowship with parishioners and volunteers. The parish used this financial windfall to generously support funding to local school chaplaincies, emergency relief to those doing it hard, and a clinic in the Philippines run by a former Buderim parishioner.

It was a wonderful experience for my wife, Margie, and I to share with so many of the dedicated parishioners, as well as those in the wider community whose lives have been touched and enriched by the ministry of St Augustine's over the years.

It was Margie Gowty's discovery a few years back that St Augustine's Church had never been consecrated that led to the churchwardens arranging for this to happen. So, the highlight of Sunday's joyful event was the consecration and to celebrate and showcase 100 years of faithful service that St Augustine's has blessed the Palmwoods community, and beyond.

## **John Barrett — Parishioner of St Augustine's, Palmwoods**

I have been going to Sunday services at St Augustine's since 1953, so I am currently the parishioner who has been worshipping there the longest. All my kids were baptised at St Augustine's.

The congregation has always been special because whenever people are in strife, such as when it floods, we always help out. Our church community is known for being caring, generous and faithful.

The highlight of Sunday's consecration and anniversary celebration was seeing people I had not seen for a while, especially people who have moved away. I had a special role to play because I have been worshipping at St Augustine's for so long — when Archbishop Jeremy knocked on the door with his crozier, I had the honour of opening the door and welcoming him into the church.

## **Laura Commins — People's Warden at St Augustine's, Palmwoods**

In 2020, my husband, Paul, and I were delighted to find that The Ven. Richard Gowty, who was our parish priest at Buderim, was working part-time after his retirement at St Augustine's in Palmwoods. We joined the parish and have been there ever since.

Our small church community is very committed and we are a great support for each other. My husband has found a rewarding ministry within our parish — organising the renovations and repairs of the old church and rectory. Even with our small numbers, we have achieved an amazing level of

community involvement through the op shop we operate from the hall, which allows us to support the work of the Chaplain at two local primary schools.

I was encouraged to hear in Archbishop Jeremy's sermon that even 100 years ago, in 1925, the Synod documents recorded the discussions around the lack of priests and insufficient money throughout our Diocese. It seems this is how the situation was, is now, and will continue to be. But our Anglican Church has survived! We were encouraged to take heart, do the best with what we have and look with hope to the future.

### **Anne Leach — Synod Rep, Rector's Warden, Treasurer and Op Shop Coordinator at St Augustine's, Palmwoods**

My husband, John, and I discovered St Augustine's by chance after moving to Palmwoods in 2017. At the second annual meeting I realised our bookkeeping was outsourced, so I volunteered to manage our church accounts, combining my organisational skills with my passion for service, and was embraced by our welcoming church family.

Though small, our congregation embodies genuine love and care, making each service a peaceful, restful experience. When our future once teetered on closing, I witnessed a true pioneering spirit as members rallied to keep our doors open for a century. This shared dedication — building by hand, fundraising and nurturing fellowship — fosters a warm, resilient community that values every individual. St Augustine's blend of history, hope and wholehearted support makes it a spiritual home I cherish.

My highlight of the centenary and consecration celebration was witnessing the unwavering commitment and collaboration of our congregation. Serving as the conduit for bringing together parishioners, Diocesan staff, clergy, and community groups, I was deeply humbled by the outpouring of support — through heartfelt notes, shared memories and the Archbishop's candid reflections on enduring challenges. Seeing familiar op shop customers join us in worship underscored our inclusive outreach and reminded me of the vital role St Augustine's plays in Palmwoods.

### **John Leach — Chair of Parish Council & Music Coordinator at St Augustine's, Palmwoods**

I was born Anglican and educated at an Anglican grammar school. As an adult in a parish on the Far South Coast of New South Wales, I served as a lay reader and preacher. When changes occurred at my home church, I temporarily joined the Presbyterians, serving as an elder before retiring in 2017 to Palmwoods.

Arriving in Palmwoods, I longed to return to my Anglican roots and discovered St Augustine's, which embodied a culture of radical inclusivity. From my first service, I felt embraced by a congregation marked by genuine warmth and acceptance. Here, I encountered no undercurrents or judgement — only kindness and respect. Volunteers and clergy alike welcomed me into joyful fellowship. The church's welcoming spirit and commitment to serving all without distinction makes St Augustine's an inspiring spiritual home.

The highlight of Sunday's service for me was reflecting on the fact that St Augustine's, Palmwoods was founded by ordinary people laying a spiritual foundation. For 100 years, this congregation persevered through societal changes to ensure its survival. Stories of concerted community effort that were

shared at the gathering — building the church hall by hand, fundraising for repairs, and fostering inclusive fellowship — illustrate a deep legacy of resilience.

Today, St Augustine's continues to carve its place in Palmwoods through vibrant outreach, worship and unwavering faith, demonstrating that dedication and unity sustain us through every challenge.

**The Baru Beat • Monday 19 May 2025 • By Richard Butler**

## **From “Amazing Grace” to “A Pub with No Beer”**



**The Rev'd Richard Butler and Diversional Therapist Jaboa Campbell at Oaks Residential Aged Care on Friday 16 May 2025**

An elderly mother living with dementia was wheeled by her son into a common room while I was conducting my monthly service of hymns and prayers. She appeared in her own world, looking into space. However, as soon as “How Great Thou Art” started playing on Spotify and those gathered starting to join in the singing, the woman came alive. She broke into song and became engaged with the group, her eyes suddenly focussed on the screen ahead. Her hands emerged from the blanket when the chorus started as she raised her arms slightly in praise. The look on her son’s face was wonderful — he gazed at his mother with both surprise and delight.

When I go into the dementia wing of an aged-care home I need to be ready for anything and quick on the uptake. My standard service plan includes two well-known hymns, such as “Morning has broken”, “Glory, glory, hallelujah”, “What a friend we have in Jesus” and “Rock of Ages”; a Gospel passage; a very brief reflection; a hymn; intercessions; and, another familiar hymn.

Sometimes service plans go awry, and I need to go with the flow. On one occasion during a service, a larrikin resident exclaimed “Here’s one that I know” before enthusiastically breaking into Slim Dusty’s “A Pub with No Beer”. When he got to, “But there’s-a nothing so lonesome, morbid or drear; Than to stand in the bar of a pub with no beer,” which are the only lines I know by heart, I joined in. During the

rest of his song, I engaged him by moving my hands like a conductor. Once Slim's song had finished, I then seamlessly continued with the service plan.

Over the last few weeks, I have been conducting Anzac Day themed services. At a different aged-care centre I facilitated a service for about eight or so people. As we sang "Amazing Grace", I noticed that one of my "regulars" had tears rolling down his cheeks. This wonderful regular is in his 90s and still very cognisant. After the service I sat next to him and gently put my hand on his shoulder, asking "I noticed you got a bit emotional when 'Amazing Grace' started playing. Can I ask why?" He responded with, "I love these Anzac Day hymns — they bring back long cherished memories of my wife. I still miss her so much." He then shared with me the story of his life through family photos for about 20 minutes, which was a privilege.

I treasure such moments in my aged-care vocational work, which is made possible by the Anglican Church Southern Queensland's Bush Ministry Fund (BMF).

I have been serving in The Parish of Warwick since the start of 2024, initially as a formation student and as a BMF-funded deacon since December.

I was raised to respect and cherish my elders. And, I have always loved engaging with community elders because they have so much wisdom to impart from their experience. So it's been delightful to find "my pocket" in this very special ministry.

I look forward to continuing this aged-care ministry and sharing with *anglican focus* readers some of the moments that move or amuse me. From the bottom of my heart, I thank all readers for their support.

**Editor's note: The Bush Ministry Fund solely funds rural ministry in our Diocese, and it is the only fund that financially supports rural ministry in our Diocese. The Bush Ministry Fund money boxes are a fun and easy way for individuals, families, parishes and schools to donate to bush ministry in our Diocese. Order your BMF money box today by emailing Helen Briffa in the Western Region office via [helen.briffa@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:helen.briffa@anglicanchurchsq.org.au) or by calling 07 4639 1875.**



## Q&A with Group Manager — Human Resources, RAP Working Group member, mum and poetry devotee, Nicole Hall



ACSQ Human Resources Group Manager Nicole Hall with Auntie Sandra King OAM at St Martin's House in May 2025

### Where did you grow up and where do you currently live?

I grew up in the Hunter Valley and lived an alternative lifestyle. My parents were hippies and until I was 15, I lived without electricity. My parents were focused on living a 100 per cent sustainable lifestyle. We lived on a large property where we produced our own food and bartered for the things we could not produce.

### How long have you been involved in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland and in what roles?

I am the Group Manager — Human Resources and have been part of the team for six months. I am based in the Finance and Diocesan Services Commission (FDSC) at the Cathedral Precinct. I have a very fulfilling role looking after the human resources (including recruitment, industrial and employee relations); work health and safety; payroll; culture; learning and development; and, injury management. I have the privilege of working intimately across all multiple areas of our Diocese, including parishes.

I also very recently started serving on the Anglican Church Southern Queensland's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group.



## **What does your primary Anglican Church role involve?**

My role is to partner with wider parts of our Diocese, including parishes, in providing advisory services across all functions in the human resources group. Ultimately, I support our Diocese to ensure that we function as efficiently as possible in all areas related to our people — employees, consultants, contractors and volunteers.

## **What projects or activities are you currently working on in your role?**

I have a number of projects on the go at any point in the time because I love to be super busy; however, my passion projects at the moment are focused on improvements to our Flourish line to make it easier to access confidential counselling support and the implementation of an injury reporting phone line. I am also overseeing the rollout of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy — an important RAP Working Group initiative that was led by the FDSC Executive Director, Joanne Stone.

## **What has been one of the highlights of your time role so far?**

Spending time with our people who are doing such amazing work in our faith community. I have been privileged to spend time with people in our organisation solving some complex issues.

## **Why is it important for all Australians to celebrate National Reconciliation Week?**

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is important to ensure that all Australians learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements. As an employer, the Anglican Church Southern Queensland needs to celebrate NRW as part of our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and respect for all in our workplaces, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## **What are some ways that parishes and ministries can commemorate National Reconciliation Week?**

Parishes and ministries can use National Reconciliation Week as an opportunity to educate their congregations, staff and members about the history of First Nations peoples and the ongoing journey towards reconciliation. They can do this by encouraging prayer or activities focused on National Reconciliation Week themes; organise a Traditional Custodian to give a Welcome to Country at a service or other gathering; and, start supporting First Nations-owned businesses, such as those on [Supply Nation](#).

## **Can you tell us a little about your Christian faith journey?**

I found my pathway to Christ later in life, through my own journey. My parents did not believe in the Christian faith, and it wasn't until I was old enough to find it myself that I found comfort in the Church. I remember when I was 16 getting up early, leaving the house and sneaking off to the local Anglican church because I had a burning need deep inside to be closer to something. I now know that the something was my faith. It is now a core part of who I am.

## **How does your Christian faith inspire you and shape your outlook, life choices and character?**

I use my Christian faith as a guiding principle or compass for my life and the decisions I need to make. I think about whether the path I am taking and the decisions I am making are in line with my Christian commitment and whether they are what the Lord would expect of me, so I can remain on the path with the Lord.

## **What are the primary strengths of the Church and what is the best way to make the most of these for the benefit of our communities?**

The Anglican Church is committed to social justice and advocacy and this is an immense support for raising awareness of important social concerns and advocating for marginalised communities. The Anglican Church has been a leading voice nationally for decades in the journey of reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Church's commitment to justice and advocacy supports those in our wider community whose voices need to be heard more. [Proverbs 31.8-9](#) says: "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy."

## **What is your favourite scripture and why?**

My favourite Bible scripture is [Joshua 1.9](#): "Be strong and courageous, do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go". I have always found this to be one of the most touching verses, as I strive to be guided by the Lord's plan for me. The scripture isn't about physical strength it is about inner fortitude, unwavering faith, being confident and accepting of God's faith despite your fears as he will be with you wherever you go.

## **What person of faith inspires you the most and why?**

It would have to be my aunt. She is as dedicated to the faith as myself and we are really the only two people in my extended family with the same level of connection to the Lord. We both feel the same sense of peace and enlightenment when we are in prayer.

## **What is the bravest or kindest gesture you have ever received or witnessed?**

I get to see examples of bravery and kindness all the time. In my role, everyday there are people who take time to step up and do things that are examples of this. I am of the belief that it shouldn't be a big gesture — you should simply try to bring love and kindness into every day. So, I try to live my life like this every day — so that when I go to bed at night, I can ask myself, "Was I brave? Was I kind? Do I feel like I ensured that my time has purpose and matters?"

## **What is the best piece of advice you have ever received and who gave you this advice?**

It was from my aunt who told me to "start each day with a new page, using my faith as the foundation for the story". She has been one of my greatest champions and guides in my life.

### **What do you do in your free time to recharge and relax?**

I collect books and read. I enjoy biographies and poetry and I have been known to write poetry on occasion. It is another thing that gives me a sense of peace.

### **If you found yourself on a deserted island, what three things would you choose to have with you?**

This is really easy — a really good book of poetry (because I could read it over and over again), a very comfortable chair, and an unlimited cup of black coffee.

### **If you could have a billboard with any text on it, what would it say and why?**

"Success is not found in material possessions, a job, or a title; it is found in inner peace, faith, love, and kindness."

I think society tends to be very focused on material items, prestige and profit, and I have a view that success is much more about you (what is happening inside you) than what is happening outside you. People should focus on being better people in themselves and to other people.

### **What book have you given away most as a gift and why?**

This is a hard question, but definitely *Wolfpack: How to come together, unleash our power, and change the game* by Abby Wambach. It is about being brave enough to walk your own path and not be expected to follow the path that others expect.

### **Where do you do your best thinking?**

In the early morning over my first cup of coffee when I feel most at peace with the world, before the day gets started. I find this an opportunity to think clearly and without pressure of meeting others' needs. It is when I have the most innovative thoughts.

### **What is your karaoke go-to song?**

"Lights on the Hill" by Slim Dusty. I used to sing this song with my uncle for many years. He played the guitar and I would sing along. I have a very ordinary singing voice, but he never cared — he was just happy to have someone to sing Slim Dusty songs with him.

### **If you are having a bad day, what do you do to cheer yourself up?**

I listen to an inspirational musical or a motivational podcast. I don't tend to spend a lot of time being in a bad mood, as I am quite good at compartmentalising things.

### **What day would you like to re-live and why?**

I think it would be lovely to relive the significant milestones in your life — at the time you are so caught up in the event, what happens next and the activity that in hindsight you don't savour it enough. So, I would love the opportunity to relive my wedding day back in 2003 and the births of my two children.



## **What makes you nostalgic and why?**

Going to second-hand bookshops and touching used books. I love the energy that comes from really old books. You can feel if they have been loved or not and I especially love it when you find old Bibles or books of poetry and they fall open to certain pages or passages where you know they have been well read. It is especially beautiful to think that someone cherished this before you.

## **What is your secret skill?**

Coaching and reconciliation. I have a natural way to bring people together and resolve problems. I see this as a challenge and it is so rewarding when parties are reunited to a common goal.

## **If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would that be?**

Definitely ocean-fresh seared scallops. I absolutely love scallops and when they are cooked beautifully it is absolute perfection.

## **What's your unanswerable question — the question you are always asking yourself?**

Are you listening to him? What is your legacy? Are you following his plan and what will you leave behind? I want to be sure that when I leave this world, I have achieved the plan God has for me.

**Editor's notes:** Visit the National Reconciliation Week website for [resources and posters](#); to find out what [events](#) are happening in your area; and, to add your [event](#) to the NRW calendar. Please remember to use “#NRW2025” on your social media posts.

Hear First Nations and community leaders share why Truth-telling and Healing are so important, particularly for the Stolen Generations. Hosted by ACSQ Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator Aunty Sandra King OAM. Thursday 29 May at 12.30pm in the Darnell Room, Cathedral Precinct. Free event. Refreshments provided. [RSVP online](#) by 5pm Wednesday 28 May for catering purposes.

## Helping children understand reconciliation



**"As adults, we can play an important role in supporting children to understand reconciliation. From an early age, children can learn about our First Nations people and understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live," says Anglicare Southern Queensland**

The reconciliation journey is one that all Australians can take, no matter their age or background. Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships and connections between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people.

As adults, we can play an important role in supporting children to understand reconciliation. From an early age, children can learn about our First Nations people and understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live. They can also be educated on Indigenous cultures, respect, equity and more.

As we move towards being a more inclusive, respectful and understanding country, it's important that children are brought along on the reconciliation journey.

### **Ways that we can help children understand reconciliation**

**Did you know that Australia's First Nations people have one of the oldest continuing cultures in the world?**

During National Reconciliation Week, and throughout the year, there are numerous ways that you can engage children in activities to promote an environment of learning and help them to understand reconciliation.

## Storytelling

A great way to introduce young children to Indigenous Australian cultures is through picture and storytelling books. Storytelling is a great learning mechanism for their developing minds.

A vast number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have used their stories to create engaging and educational books for children to learn about their cultures, histories and values.

You can access First Nations children's books at your local library, or support local authors and illustrators by purchasing books from online retailers like:

- [Welcome to Country](#)
- [Riley Callie Resources](#)
- [Magabala Books.](#)

## Discussions with Elders

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Elders and community members have incredible stories to tell. Passed down for generations, their stories teach lessons, values, traditions and more.

By inviting a known Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Elder or community member to share their culturally significant stories with groups of children (and adults), listeners can learn more about Indigenous cultures on a deeper and personal level. Thus, leaving them with a lasting impression.

## Arts and crafts

Another way to engage children in Indigenous culture and strengthen their understanding of reconciliation is through creative learning and play. Here are some arts and craft activities for children to do while also learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures:

- [Colouring and activity sheets](#)
- Painting the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander flag
- Dot painting
- Rock painting
- Painting a scene from a Dreamtime story
- Painting Aboriginal symbols or stones
- [Nature Walk and Collage](#) (using items collected on the walk, i.e. leaves and sticks).



## Learning Indigenous languages

This involves helping children to learn simple words and phrases from different Indigenous languages. You can take this one step further and encourage them to incorporate their learnings into games.

Here are some [tips for adults and educators when teaching](#) children Indigenous languages.

## Bush and nature walks

For a lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their culture is centered on their deep connection to the land. Not only are bush and nature walks a great learning opportunity for adults, but they can also teach children a lot about sacred sites, stories and appreciation of flora and fauna.

Bush and nature walks are usually led by Aboriginal Elders or guides. To find out about a guided walk near you, chat to a community Elder or visit sites like the ones listed below for more information.

- [Queensland](#)
- [Visit Brisbane](#)
- [Discover Aboriginal Experiences](#)
- [Australia.](#)

## Other ways to help children understand reconciliation and First Nations cultures

Here are some other ways to educate children about reconciliation and First Nations cultures:

- Exploring traditional foods such as kangaroo meat, damper, insects like witchetty grubs, and certain fruits and seeds
- Celebrate Indigenous holidays and traditions like [National Reconciliation Week](#) and [NAIDOC Week](#) and commemorate [National Sorry Day](#)
- Engage in opportunities for ongoing learning and collaboration.

## Find out more

To find out more about Anglicare Southern Queensland's journey towards reconciliation and commitment to First Nations people, please visit our [First Nations page](#).

Alternatively, for more children and parenting resources please visit our [Family Support Resources page](#).

First published on the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) on 26 May 2025.

## Torres Strait 8 traditional owner and Archbishop Jeremy call upon the prime minister to say “yes” to Yessie during National Reconciliation Week in an open letter



**"Torres Strait 8" Traditional Owner Yessie Mosby showing Archbishop Jeremy Greaves the impacts of climate change, including the shrinking shoreline and where the ancestral resting places were previously located before being washed away, at his family's property on Masig on Saturday 11 May 2024**

Archbishop Jeremy and the Torres Strait 8 spokesperson have today invited the prime minister to meet them on the Torres Strait Island of Masig to witness the devastating impacts of climate change on the low-lying island.

The invitation, issued via an open letter on the first day of National Reconciliation Week, follows Archbishop Jeremy's climate-related visit to Masig, the island of Kulkalgal traditional owner and Torres Strait 8 spokesperson Yessie Mosby, last year.

"We write this open letter to you during National Reconciliation Week in a spirit of good faith and as Anglicans and Queensland community leaders," the open letter said.

"Torres Strait Islander peoples are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and urgent action is needed to ensure they can remain on their homelands and maintain their sacred connection to land, sea and sky.

"King tides, erosion, seawater inundation and coral bleaching are threatening Torres Strait Islander peoples' homes, while successive Australian Governments have refused to effectively address the climate crisis.

"In May last year, we walked around Yessie's island, Masig, to take in its beauty and to lament the damaging impacts of the changing climate.

"Together we discussed the healing properties of Masig's bush medicine, including the island's bark, flowers, fruits, leaves and sap.

"Together we looked at a coconut tree lying on the sand — a tree that had been standing tall and proud less than three months before, a tree that was planted with a newborn's umbilical cord thus becoming that baby's tree for life.

"Together we looked at the incomplete seawall — a wall that needs urgent completion because the shore is rapidly eroding — and discussed other strategies that need to be implemented to protect Masig and other low-lying Torres Strait Islands.

"And, together we observed where ancestor burial places have washed out to sea, including Yessie's great-great-great-grandmother's grave."

The "[Torres Strait 8](#)" made legal history in 2022 after the United Nations Human Rights Committee found that the Australian Government is violating its human rights obligations to them through climate change inaction.

"The landmark decision obliges the Australian Government to do whatever it takes to ensure the safe existence of the Torres Strait Islands, and this includes engaging in meaningful consultations with their communities to assess their needs," the open letter said.

The open letter states that the prime minister has failed to respond to previous invitations to visit Masig from Mr Mosby and requests that the Hon Anthony Albanese MP visit the island in the next 12 months.

"We merely ask for your commitment — will you as prime minister visit Masig in this first year of your new government?" Mr Mosby and Archbishop Jeremy ask.

The open letter was emailed to the prime minister this morning, with Mr Mosby and Archbishop Jeremy also recording their invitation for the Archbishop's [YouTube](#) channel.

The open letter has also been published [online](#) inviting support from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and faith groups.

Numerous inter-faith and community group leaders have already signed on in support of the open letter, including representatives from Reconciliation Queensland, the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, the Queensland Community Alliance, the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod and the Queensland District of the Lutheran Church.

National Reconciliation Week started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 — the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples — with the support of faith communities Australia-wide.

National Reconciliation Week is held annually between 27 May and 3 June, commemorating the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.



Masig, also known as Yorke Island, is a coral cay located in the eastern area of the central island group of the Kulkalgal nation of Zenadh Kes, also known as the Torres Strait Islands.

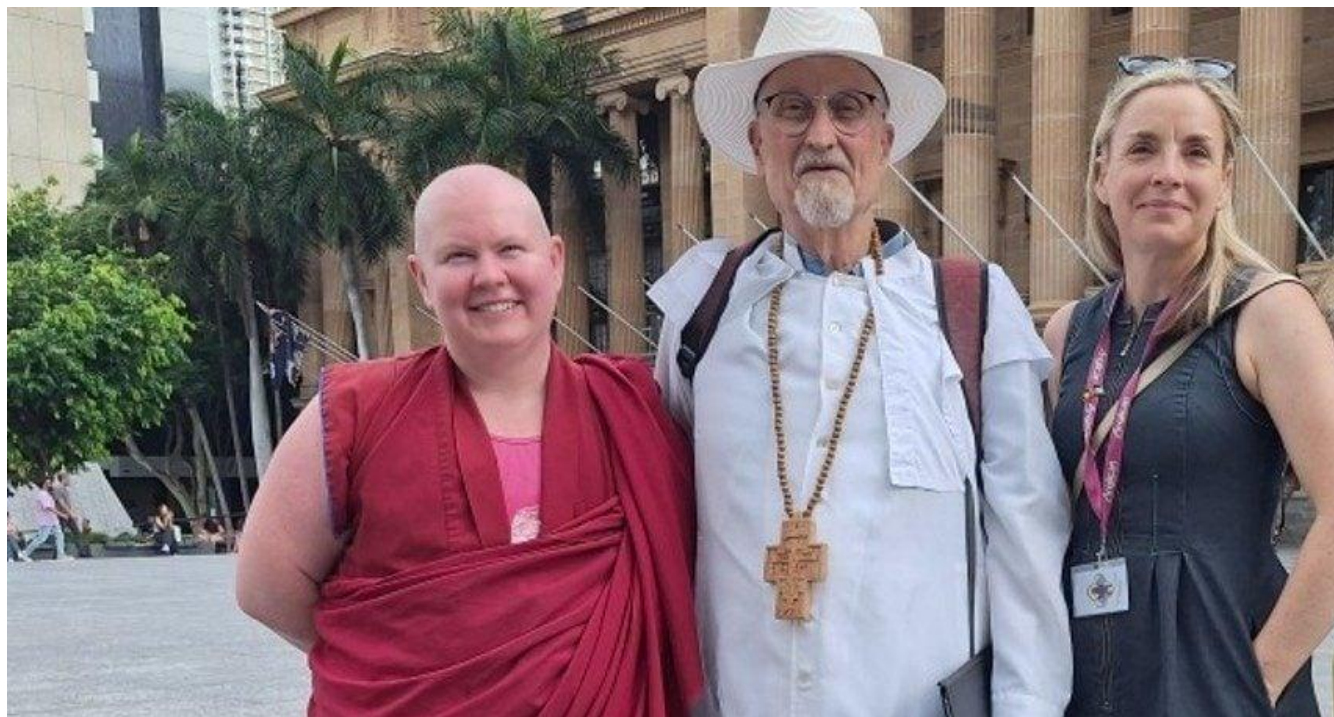
Last month Labor promised an additional \$36.2 million over five years to help fund Stage 3 of the Torres Strait Seawalls Program for the islands of Poruma, Iama, Masig, Warraber and Badu.

While the additional seawall funding is welcomed, the Torres Strait 8 spokesperson and the senior Anglican leader want the prime minister to see the urgency of the seawall's completion and the severe impacts of successive governments' climate change inaction with them on Masig firsthand.

**Justice Unit note: If you are the nominated representative of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation or of a faith group and you would like to support Archbishop Jeremy and Yessie's open letter to the prime minister during National Reconciliation Week, please register your support [online](#).**

**Justice & Advocacy • Tuesday 27 May 2025 • By Fr Martin Arnold**

## **"If I say, 'Trust in God', am I giving them a stone instead of bread?"**



**Buddhist nun Lozang Pema, Ukrainian Catholic priest Fr Martin Arnold and Anglican Church Southern Queensland Director of Community Engagement Michelle McDonald at a Stand With Ukraine rally in Brisbane's King George Square in January 2025**

**Please be aware that this content contains references to a military invasion and sexual assault.**

There is a saying in Ukraine "This is the fourth year of a war in its second decade that has been going on for 300 years."

In February 2022, the Russian Federation extended its invasion of Ukraine.

In 2014, Russia invaded Crimea and Donbas.

So, it's been occupying parts of south-east Ukraine for more than 10 years.

It's been 300 years since Pyotr Romanov was proclaimed the Russian emperor, who continued a policy of empire building to make Ukraine one of the subjects of a vast empire.

After 300 years of imperialism, I have found that Ukrainians can be weary and wary of opening up. This can make pastoral and spiritual care conversations complex.

Since February 2022, I've noticed that if someone is talking lovingly or nostalgically about a loved one or a beloved place in Ukraine, they are often sharing their worries in an indirect way.

Local Ukrainians have shared with me about many atrocities. One woman recently shared her worries about a school friend — a young soldier — who is now missing and presumed dead. She shared about how they sat together in school and about his bubbly and funny nature.

One parishioner shared about how much of the big, sophisticated city where she grew up has been destroyed. The Russian army's way is to destroy the buildings and the people in them; then, if they can, invading the town or village, wreaking havoc on civilians indiscriminately.

Other parishioners have shared about how their family members have fled their homes in terror and then fled again and again.

Women and children who have come to Queensland on temporary humanitarian visas have shared their worries about their male relatives who have had to stay in Ukraine, especially if they are fighting in the army — sons, husbands, brothers, fathers.

This all takes its toll — generation upon generation — on a people.

Like it is for any priest, my role has a pastoral and spiritual care component.

The period since February 2022 has been the most pastorally challenging for me as a priest. I have heard stories of massacres, torture and sexual assault committed by Russian troops. I have heard stories of family members witnessing atrocities committed against their loved ones, including torture of Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Ukrainians continue to be appalled by the human rights violations of Russian Federation forces, which aren't isolated incidents of soldiers misbehaving, but a policy of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

I often ask myself, "What am I to do and say?"

If I say, "Trust in God", am I giving them a stone instead of bread?

If I say, "We are called to love our enemy," which we are, am I alienating them rather than sharing Christ's love?

If I say, “I understand what you are feeling,” am I trivialising the experience of people who are enduring terrible trauma rather than empathising with them?

When smoking was more common, we priests were advised to “Keep your pipe filled”. This meant listening more than speaking.

So, what I have found most effective in these pastoral and spiritual care conversations is to listen — staying engaged and focused, intuitively knowing when to glean and when to ask questions.

Sometimes I suggest praying together, either aloud or silently. At other times it’s best to let the parishioner suggest this.

In the past three years, I have come to deeply appreciate the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), which the Anglican Church Southern Queensland is connected to through the Queensland Community Alliance and the Brisbane Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS) Network.

It is comforting to see Sally and other QPASTT folk at the “Gathering in Prayer for Gaza” inter-faith vigils, which QPASTT co-hosts along with the Anglican Church Southern Queensland and organisations like the United Nations Association of Australia Queensland branch. I join other inter-faith leaders in prayer at each of these vigils.

Sally Stewart and other dedicated QPASTT workers have shown me the importance of healing terrible traumatic memories, as Sally says:

“QPASTT helps to liberate people from the harms of torture and trauma related to their refugee experience. Our trauma recovery service supports individuals, families, groups and communities because the impacts of persecution on identity and belonging are felt both individually and collectively.

“QPASTT has supported more than 187 people who have come to Queensland from the Ukraine to Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Cairns because of the current invasion. We provide individual counselling for children, youth and adults. We also provide social and emotional wellbeing support through a vibrant women’s group who support one another with QPASTT to find ways to heal and keep as well as possible during the protracted invasion.

“QPASTT also advocates for the needs of families and community in relation to fair access to education and employment and for a more durable migration pathway to Australia.”

I thank God every day for the support of organisations like QPASTT and the Anglican Church, as well as the support of other allies.

**Justice Unit note: Three ways *anglican focus* readers can help support Ukraine and Ukrainians:**

- 1. Pray for an end to Russia’s invasion and for a just peace.**
- 2. Join in a Stand With Ukraine rally.**
- 3. Keep up to date with Ukrainian Community of Queensland Inc news and appeals on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).**



4. Contact your [Lower House elected representatives](#) and [Senators](#) to show your support for the Australian Government's assistance to Ukraine and Ukrainians and to ask them to work towards a just peace in Ukraine and other places in the world impacted by invasion, occupation and war.

Local • Monday 26 May 2025 • By Ben Rogers

## Fraser Coast Anglican College student is a roaring success at Lions Youth of the Year national finals



Fraser Coast Anglican College Head of Secondary School Juliane Hallam (Left), National Champion Jasper (Centre) and Head of English Maxime Saltmarsh (Right)

After a competitive process in the Lions Youth of the Year National Finals going head-to-head against Australia's outstanding senior high school students with exemplary community and school contributions, Fraser Coast Anglican College (FCAC) student, vice-captain and prefect Jasper has emerged as the National Champion, a prestigious and well-earned title following Jasper's extensive training supported by the College.

The Lions Youth of the Year Program has been instrumental in encouraging and fostering future generations of young Australian leaders through a focus on senior high school students' contributions to their communities and schools, public speaking, academic skills and sporting and cultural involvement.

For Jasper, the Lions Clubs Australia [Youth of the Year Program](#) is a family affair, but his decision to participate this year was one sparked by an offer from the College's Head of English.

"I had a passion for Lions Youth of the Year after my sister participated in the program in 2018," Jasper said.

"I was fortunate enough to represent Fraser Coast Anglican College at the club level after I was offered to participate by my Head of English, Mrs Maxime Saltmarsh."

Jasper's journey to National Champion would not have been possible without the support of the College, in particular Mrs Saltmarsh who runs a Literacy Leaders Club to help prepare students who want to participate in the Lions competition.

"One of the aims of the Literacy Leaders Club, which extends students in creative writing, spelling and public speaking, is to prepare interested seniors for the Lions Youth of the Year competition," explained Mrs Saltmarsh.

"Most of our training during Literacy Leaders involves responding to unseen topics, which prepares students for the impromptu speeches as well as their interviews.

"I was able to support Jasper in person at every single one of his events, right from the local level here in Hervey Bay to the National Finals in Victoria, and we made accommodations for Jasper's school work by arranging extensions where possible."

According to Jasper, without the support from Mrs Saltmarsh throughout the competitive process he would never have made National Champion.

"Mrs Saltmarsh has been paramount in my achievements at Youth of the Year: sacrificing many lunchtimes to help refine my impromptu response skills and giving me constructive feedback to improve," he said.

"I owe a great deal to Mrs Saltmarsh for my success throughout the program and she and her husband came to every single round to show their support for me — the regional final in Bundaberg, the district final in Bargara, the state final in Brisbane and the national final in Victoria."

Competitors who made the finals in Victoria not only had to perform at superior levels when it came to public speaking, they had to stay informed about current events, both at home and abroad.

"I had two different impromptu questions at each round such as 'What does privilege look like in the modern world?' and 'What does success mean to you?'," Jasper said.

"My five-minute prepared speech was on violence against women and highlighted that as men, we have a responsibility to advocate for women everywhere.

"The preparation process involved about 20 hours of practice impromptus and speech rehearsal, as well as staying informed on current events."

It may have been a competition, but for Jasper one of the highlights was the friends he made during the finals.

"After arriving in Victoria, I met the most incredible people in my fellow contestants and I cannot explain just how incredible they are," he said.

“We started a group chat to keep in contact, and we call every single day for hours on end.”

Both Jasper and Mrs Saltmarsh have only praise for the program and encourage other young students to consider it, for both enhancing public speaking skills and to connect with others.

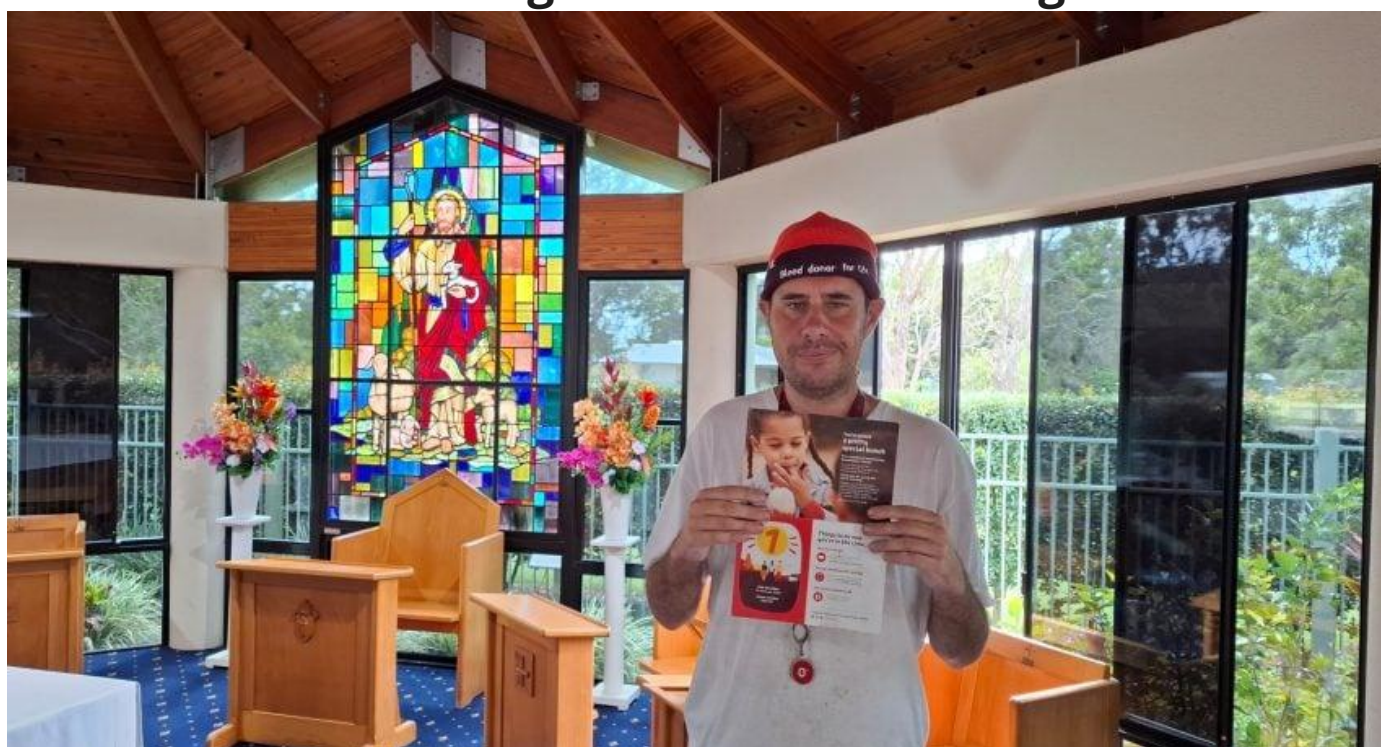
“It is an incredibly rewarding experience — not only does it give you the opportunity to share your voice with the wider community, it grows your public speaking skills and connects you with like-minded peers,” Mrs Saltmarsh said.

“The opportunities that this program offers are truly unmatched,” Jasper concurred.

“You have everything to gain, and absolutely nothing to lose. Just do it.”

**Reflections • Wednesday 28 May 2025 • By Alexi Malmgren**

## **“I feel like I am making a difference when I give blood”**



**“It’s important to give blood because there is a high need in the community,” says Alexi Malmgren from St John’s, Hervey Bay**

I started giving blood about two and half years ago. My first donation was for whole blood. Most people just donate plasma the first time. There are three kinds of donation: blood, plasma and platelets.

They sent me a card after my first blood donation. The card showed a little girl named Sienna who needed open heart surgery. The card reminds me of the story of Jesus raising the daughter of Jarius ([Mark 5:22-41](#)). It’s actually become one of my favourite miracles. Just the fact that he’s raising a little girl really resonates with me.

Giving blood helps to bring healing to another. I like helping the community and being a Good Samaritan.



I donate plasma every two weeks and full blood every 12 weeks. Then I take a break for a month before the cycle starts again.

I originally started doing it because I felt lonely and isolated. It was a way for me to connect. But now I give blood mostly because I know that it saves lives and that it's a good way to give to my community.

The first nurse I've talked to reckons that a lot of first-time donors actually start donating so they can find ways to connect. She said she first started noticing this when she was working in another city during the COVID-19 lockdowns. She said that blood donation clinics were overflowing.

It's important to give blood. My plasma can be used for [18 different](#) life-saving ways, including for bone marrow transplants and treating liver disease, severe burns and tetanus.

Plasma is the yellowish liquid part of your blood that holds all the other blood cells.

When you give a blood donation, it contains some plasma. But, when you donate just plasma, you give about twice as much.

My blood type is O negative. That's the universal red cell type because it can be used in transfusions for any blood type. My white cells are apparently not that valuable.

My blood is CMV (cytomegalovirus) negative. CMV is common flu-like virus. It's very deadly to babies and can also be fatal for people with weak immune systems. It's rare to have CMV-negative blood. The nurses kind of treat me like I'm quite famous in the medical world.

I'm almost regarded as mythical because my blood type is O and CMV negative and because I am male — blood used for transfusions to babies in neonatal units needs to come from [men donors](#) who are O negative and CMV negative.

It's important to give blood because there is a high need in the community. [Australia needs](#) over 1.7 million donations every year to meet demand. That equates to three donations every minute. More people need to give blood. It's needed for illnesses, car accidents, injuries, pregnant mums, surgery, and more.

I feel warm after I give blood. Maybe because of the saline injection. I also feel good emotionally. I love that I'm actually helping people, plus I'm proud that my blood type is so needed I love the mythical status of my blood at the medical community according.

Most donors at the centre I go to don't really talk much to each other. I don't. Apparently at large centres it's a bit different. After I donate, I go to the snack bar and get a little pie and a few little nibbles.

The needles don't hurt at the donor centre. In fact, the nurses pride themselves on how painlessly they can place a needle. They are very gentle.

Giving blood is a very straightforward process. There are a lot of strict safety rules. For example, one time I had to defer a week because my blood pressure was too low.

I feel like I am making a difference when I give blood. I also like the social interaction with the nurses. The nurses are lovely.



It's a good day when I give blood — I feel fantastic.

Reflections • Wednesday 28 May 2025 • By Stephan Prabu

## What courageous person inspires you and why? | The Rev'd Stephan Prabu



**"Vinayak S Masoji was an excellent artist who created Christian paintings in the Indian context...I admire him for his bold approach, especially in the way he produced outstanding pictures in his endeavour to Indianise Christian themes, such as the nativity, epiphany, Jesus as guru (teacher or master), crucifixion, resurrection," says The Rev'd Stephan Prabu**

I remember the story of my wife's great-grandfather Vinayak S Masoji who was a student of polymath Rabindranath Tagore. Vinayak S Masoji served as the vice-principal of Shantiniketan, a rural school and arts centre based on ancient traditions that was established in 1901 in West Bengal, India. Vinayak S Masoji was an excellent artist who created Christian paintings in the Indian context. He was skilled in blending Christian concepts with the Indian culture, and many believe that he hasn't gained the recognition he deserved. I admire him for his bold approach, especially in the way he produced outstanding pictures in his endeavour to Indianise Christian themes, such as the nativity, epiphany, Jesus as *guru* (teacher or master), crucifixion, resurrection, and so on.

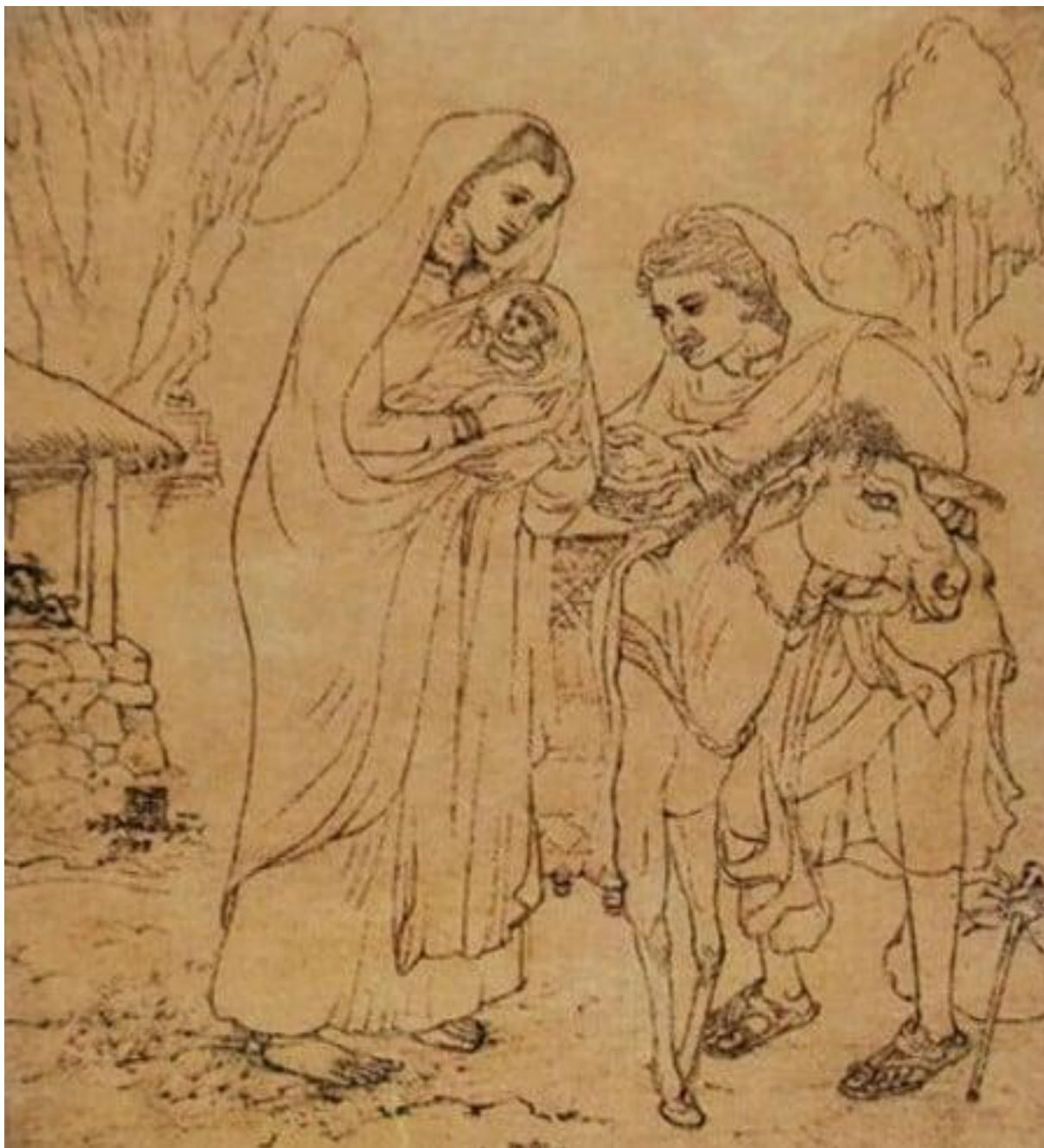


***Shepherds Adoring the Baby Jesus* by Vinayak S Masojinew (1966, size 34.5cm X 32.3cm, woodcut)**

I reckon the gospel of Jesus is universal; however, it doesn't reach the world raw, rather taking various cultural forms in different communities. Two of the most attractive things about the gospel are its adaptability and embraceability.

Every Christian faith community is a result of accepting the gospel of Jesus. I trust the core reason of existence of any faith community is to be faithful to its identities, including embracing new communities. Unfortunately, it took 20 centuries for the Church to openly confess various types of oppressions that the Church has perpetrated or supported.





***The Flight to Egypt* by Vinayak S Masojinew (1953, 29.6cm X 22cm, brush line on rice paper)**

I think we need to be more courageous about incorporating rich cultural elements from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in our liturgy. Although, saying the Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of services or other gatherings is a good place to start, incorporating rich cultural elements into our worship could truly honour First Nations communities. To embrace the spirit of reconciliation, two of our meeting rooms have been named after First Nations communities in our parish.

This year I aim to create more touch points for new communities around our parish, so people feel welcomed and embraced. For example, a community garden and community kitchen are in the pipeline and will be launched later this year.

## Recycling guide for South East Queensland



**This year's World Environment Day theme is #BeatPlasticPollution, and this year's World Environment Day observance comes as countries make progress towards securing a global treaty to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment**

Recycling reduces the need to extract resources such as timber, water and minerals for new products. As well as saving resources, recycling saves energy, reduces harmful gases that cause the earth to overheat, prevents waste going into landfill and protects our waterways.

For example, more than [400 million tonnes](#) of plastic are produced globally worldwide. Half of this is designed to be used only once, and of this less than 10 per cent is recycled. An estimated 11 million tonnes of plastic end up in creeks, rivers, lakes and seas annually, which is about the weight of a total of 2,200 Eiffel Towers.

This year's [World Environment Day](#) theme is #BeatPlasticPollution, and this year's World Environment Day observance comes as countries make progress towards securing a [global treaty](#) to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Recycling plastic and other items is a great way to care for Creation, so I have compiled the following guide ahead of World Environment Day on 5 June for readers.

If you need more information, [Planet Ark's Recycling Near You](#) has great guides about how to recycle different plastic items, and other products, and where to do so.

It's helpful to be aware that every council's recycling and waste centre is different and may not offer disposal for every waste type. Before you head off, check your council's website to see what items they accept.



## Clear plastic containers

Place these containers into the household recycling bin – they should be clean and dry.

## Plastic, aluminium, glass, steel and liquid paperboard drink containers

Most aluminium, glass, plastic, steel and liquid paperboard drink containers between 150ml and 3L can be recycled at [Queensland Containers for Change](#) centres. You'll receive 10 cents for every eligible container you return, which you can keep or donate.

## Plastic blister packs

Blister packs used to store medications can be recycled via [Pharmacycle](#) bins at select Chemist Warehouse, National Pharmacies and Blooms the Chemist stores.

## Beverage cartons

For most Australians, cartons containing fresh products found in the fridge at stores can be recycled at home. Long-life cartons such as long-life milk (found on shelves in stores) are not accepted by all councils for recycling but are accepted by [Brisbane City Council](#).

Some can be recycled for a 10c refund, so check the packaging and the [Containers for Change website](#).

## Aerosol cans

Empty, intact aerosol cans can be safely recycled in household recycling bins along with other metal packaging. If the aerosol can isn't empty, it should be disposed of through your council's hazardous waste program. Contact your council directly for more information.

## Aluminium cans

Predominantly used as drink cans, most Australians can recycle aluminium cans via their household recycling bin. As above, some types of aluminium cans, such as soft drink cans, can be recycled through your local [Queensland Containers for Change](#) centre.

## Asbestos

Asbestos is best known for its use as insulation and as a building material found in many older properties across the country. Asbestos must **never** be put in your household recycling or waste bin. Asbestos is toxic and should always be handled by a licensed professional. See more on the [Planet Ark](#) website.

## Bamboo and wood cutlery

Bamboo and wood cutlery should be placed into the general waste bin.

## Barbecue gas bottles

Empty gas canisters can be swapped for filled ones at select petrol stations, hardware stores like Bunnings and Mitre10, caravan parks and convenience stores. Otherwise, they should be taken to [specialised recycling services](#).

## Batteries

Batteries should never be put in your recycling or waste bin. Rechargeable batteries and lithium-ion batteries are hazardous and could produce sparks that may start a fire in the trucks or recycling facility. This includes batteries in laptops, mobile phones, power tools and cameras. [Place sticky tape around battery terminals](#) (see the illustration) to prevent fires.

[Aldi](#) offers a free battery recycling service at all their Australian stores. Any brand of AA, AAA, C, D and 9V batteries (both rechargeable and non-rechargeable) are accepted. Simply drop your used batteries into the dedicated bins in store. For other services and for options for different battery types (such as buttons and 12 volts) see below.

[Battery World](#) has a recycling program with collection points at most stores. Check with your local store to find out which types of batteries are accepted.

[Bunnings](#) has a recycling program for batteries, including batteries from power tools. The recycling unit is located at the front of each store. Handheld batteries are accepted including AA, AAA, C, D, 9V, 6V and button batteries.

[Coles](#) is rolling out battery recycling units in their stores. Check directly with your store to see if they have a recycling unit. Various types of household batteries are accepted including AA, AAA, C, D, 6V, 9V, button batteries, rechargeable batteries, and batteries that can be easily removed from electrical products, such as cameras and power tools.

[Officeworks](#) is no longer accepting batteries, at in-store recycling units, but some stores may accept audio and tech accessories, ink and toner cartridges, and data storage equipment such as USB and hard drives.

[Woolworths](#) has battery and mobile phone collection points in-store.

Mobile phone batteries are accepted by MobileMuster, including at Officeworks, and Woolworths. Visit the [Planet Ark](#) website for more mobile phone recycling options.

Computer batteries can be recycled through an accredited recycler of the [National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme](#).

Car batteries can be disposed of at your council's recycling and waste centre or at [RepcO](#) and [Supercheap Auto](#). They can also be recycled at many garages, transfer stations and waste management centres.

**Editor's note: Angligrreen and the ACSQ's Justice Unit are encouraging the "Plastic-free July" initiative. Visit the [Plastic-free July](#) website for [resources](#) and [ideas](#).**

The ACSQ's first [Sustainability Roadmap](#) lays out a framework for the different parts of our Diocesan community to formalise Sustainability Action Plans in a staged rollout.

Local • Monday 19 May 2025 • By Ben Rogers

## A new chapter in human rights advocacy begins at Toowoomba Anglican School



**Toowoomba Anglican School students and staff involved with the school's newly created Amnesty International Group: (Front row, Left to Right) Mr David Parrington, Hugo and Oscar (Back row, Left to Right) Sophie, Grace and Ella**

Toowoomba Anglican School (TAS) students with a passion for social justice advocacy will have a new extracurricular club to join with the establishment of the school's first Amnesty International Group.

The new group was the direct result of TAS student and staff attendance at the recent Brisbane Amnesty International Schools Conference at Brisbane Boys' College where a special focus on refugee rights drew hundreds of students from Brisbane schools to hear from guest speakers and participate in interactive workshops.

It was an inspiring day for those in attendance and TAS students left the conference knowing they had to take further action to push for human rights protections around the globe. It wasn't long before the idea for the school's first Amnesty International Group was born.

Created in 1961 as a non-governmental organisation advocating for people facing torture, execution or incarceration based on their socio-political or religious beliefs, Amnesty International has since blossomed into a global movement of over 10 million people dedicated to advocating for, and protecting, human rights around the world.

For TAS Year 11 student Amalia, hearing the profound tales of struggle and resilience shared by refugees at the conference demonstrated to her the urgent need for action by students through the creation of a school Amnesty International Group.

"This conference was a wakeup call for our school and we've realised the privilege that we have and that we haven't used it to our advantage to aid our community," Amalia said.

"In response to that we'd like to put together our own Amnesty International Group focusing on issues close to our community."

Similarly, TAS Year 11 student Hugo found the conference's activities a deeply educational experience on the many challenges refugees and people seeking asylum face fleeing persecution and war.

"It was an enlightening experience that deepened our understanding of human rights and the importance of advocacy," Hugo said.

"During the conference, we mainly listened to guest speakers who shared powerful, personal stories especially about what it was like fleeing their home countries and seeking safety in Australia.

"Hearing these real-life experiences helped us better understand the challenges that refugees and people seeking asylum face.

We also did a small workshop where we reflected on what we learned in the day and talked about how we, as young people, can be more aware of human rights issues in our everyday lives."

Joining the students at the conference was TAS secondary teacher David Parrington who found inspiration in seeing so many young people energised by human rights advocacy.

"Students play a vital role in driving change by raising awareness, standing up for those without a voice, and inspiring others to take action on important human rights issues," Mr Parrington said.

"My biggest takeaway from the conference was realising the real impact young people can have in promoting justice and human rights, both locally and globally, through collective action."

With a range of meaningful initiatives and activities slated for the newly formed Amnesty International Group, Mr Parrington is encouraging students keen to make their mark on human rights work to get involved.

"Students who join the TAS Amnesty Group can expect engaging discussions, awareness campaigns, and hands-on projects like letter-writing, fundraising and advocacy events aimed at making a difference in our community and beyond," he said.



## Anglicare and Woollam Constructions partner to deliver youth homelessness accommodation



**(L-R) Mike Marjanovic – Woollam Project Manager; Rees Maddren – Anglicare Southern Queensland Insync Youth Service Manager; Tammy Lloyd – Anglicare Southern Queensland Chief Operating Officer for Children, Youth and Families; Sue Cooke – Anglicare Southern Queensland Chief Executive Officer; Hayden Ross – Woollam Regional Manager; and Rudii Lundgren – Woollam Site Manager**

Anglicare Southern Queensland has appointed Woollam Constructions to deliver its \$14 million youth homelessness accommodation service in Beenleigh, which aims to address the housing crisis.

Anglicare Southern Queensland Chief Executive Officer Sue Cooke, said that the 30-unit accommodation service is designed to support young people aged 16-25, who are either homeless or at significant risk of homelessness.

“I am pleased to announce that Woollam Constructions has been appointed as our construction partner for this important project,” Ms Cooke said.

“Woollam Constructions was selected following a robust tender process and are particularly well regarded for their experience and reputation in delivering projects of this size and nature, throughout Australia. I am confident that with the partnership of Woollam Constructions this project will be delivered with care and professionalism. I look forward to working together to provide a significant solution to the housing crisis facing young people.”

Woollam Constructions Managing Director Craig Percival said that Woollam is proud to be working alongside Anglicare on this meaningful project that will provide much-needed support and housing for young people.

“With over 140 years of experience building in South East Queensland, we’re committed to creating spaces that do more than just house people—they help them thrive,” Mr Percival said.

“This is more than just construction—it’s about community. We’re honoured to be delivering a space that will give young people the stability and opportunity they deserve.”

Sue Cooke added that the service will include 24 studio apartments and six one-bedroom apartments for couples or small families and will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Construction will commence in April 2025 and expected to be complete in mid-2026, creating several local jobs and an economic boost for the area.

“Sadly, nearly a quarter of Australians experiencing homelessness are aged between 12 and 24. In particular, the South Brisbane-Logan corridor has a significant shortage of immediate need accommodation for young people facing homelessness,” Ms Cooke said.

“The location has been chosen as it’s close to public amenities including shopping centres, business and civic centres, a local sports centre, public green spaces, and has convenient access to public transport.

“In addition to accommodation, residents will also receive a suite of wrap-around support services to help improve life skills and increase independence, while providing the care and connections these young people need, through a case-planned process.

“Anglicare Southern Queensland is committed to doing all that we can to help alleviate the housing crisis. We know that with stable housing and the right support network, young people can positively change their life trajectory by securing employment, education, and long-term housing.

“We are one of the largest providers of youth homelessness accommodation services in Southeast Queensland. In the last financial year the organisation provided immediate need accommodation, transitional housing and support services to over 152 young people.

“At Anglicare, we’re here to help those at risk to find a home, but we know we can’t do it alone. We are seeking corporate donors and partners to help realize this important community project and welcome in-kind or financial contributions of any size as part of our annual tax appeal” Ms Cooke said.

Anglicare’s 2025 tax appeal is targeting the ambitious goal of \$70,000 in donations by July with all funds raised going directly towards the Beenleigh project.

**For more information, visit [www.anglicaresq.org.au/fundraising/youth-homeless-accommodation-build/](http://www.anglicaresq.org.au/fundraising/youth-homeless-accommodation-build/)**

**To donate through the tax appeal, please visit our giving page [here](#).**

## Transformative leader appointed Anglican Schools Commission's Executive Director



**Catherine O'Sullivan is the new Executive Director at Anglican Schools Commission**

Ms O'Sullivan has been acting in the role for the past year, and was appointed following a comprehensive, nationwide search.

Ms O'Sullivan trained as a high school teacher and taught in public schools for 17 years.

For the past two decades the former Goondiwindi State High School Principal has held senior governance and leadership roles within education and government, including at RMIT University and Bond University.

Ms O'Sullivan's appointment as Executive Director will see her continue to transform the position and standing of Anglican schools throughout Queensland.

"I have the honour of working with some of the best minds, who oversee some of the best schools in Queensland," Ms O'Sullivan said.

"Anglican schools in Queensland are incubators of innovation, social justice and academic excellence. Importantly, they are supported by parents who value and celebrate a quality education.

"I want Anglican schools in Queensland to be recognised globally for innovation and the way they champion social justice. It's essential all students have equal opportunities and access to resources, regardless of their background or circumstances, so they can thrive.

"I am passionate about building a brighter future at our schools through values and beliefs steeped in the Anglican tradition of serving others."

Archbishop of Brisbane Jeremy Greaves said Ms O'Sullivan is an outstanding leader and a fierce advocate of the value of an Anglican education.

"In partnership with our school principals, Catherine is responsible for the education and personal growth of more than 22,000 students," Archbishop Greaves said.

"Catherine's skill and leadership will help nurture and inspire young men and women of character, so they can lead and serve in communities across the globe for a common good."

Anglican Church Southern Queensland General Manager, Tim Reid, said Ms O'Sullivan was the standout candidate for the position.

"Anglican schools are unapologetically committed to the intellect and the relentless, fearless pursuit of truth, qualities which can also be used to describe Catherine," Mr Reid said.

"Catherine is a commercially focused, savvy entrepreneurial leader. Her curiosity and strategic mindset will ensure the Anglican Schools Commission flourishes."

The Anglican Schools Commission owns 11 schools, including Anglican Church Grammar School, St Hilda's School and The Southport School, supports 13 others and operates a network of early childhood centres throughout Queensland.