

Jailing is failing: Synod speech



"The saying 'It takes a village to raise a child' comes from Africa. We all have a responsibility to ensure our young people thrive," said Bishop Daniel Abot (at the 2026 ACSQ Synod), pictured here Dr Stephen Harrison (Image by anglican focus)

Mr President, members of Synod.

I often reflect on a conversation I had around a decade ago after a Sunday service with a young South Sudanese teenage boy. He was a very young child when he came here as a refugee, arriving with just his father and a sibling. Around the time I met him he was involved in a gang. I first connected with him when he was invited by his sibling to church. The first time I saw him at church I approached him for a gentle chat. He kept coming back to church. We got into the habit of talking, laughing and praying together after Sunday services. I could see the eagerness and goodness in his eyes as we chatted. After just a few months of joining in Sunday services he asked me, "Do you know why I keep coming to church?" When I replied, "Why?" he said, "Because you do not judge me for my dread-locked hair and the clothes I wear." I responded with, "I am not worthy to judge anyone." He withdrew from the gang. He quickly got his life on track. He went back to school. After he graduated he got a job and bought a house. He is now happily married with children of his own. The welcoming connections he experienced at a parish changed the course of his life.

My key word is "prevention".

As a bishop, who especially serves South Sudanese and Sudanese communities, I have witnessed firsthand the damage that jailing young people does. I have also witnessed firsthand the healing that comes with community-led early intervention, as the story of the young teenager I just shared shows.

Every person has their story. As a community I think we need to ask ourselves, “What are the causes and how can we as a community help?” South Sudanese and Sudanese young people are disproportionately represented in our prisons. So are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

I recently read an [anglican focus article](#) by a young Torres Strait Islander man from our Diocesan community named Aiden, who wrote:

“I’m lucky — I’ve had opportunity. But I’ve read that a young Indigenous man is more likely to end up in jail than go to university.”

Aiden goes on to write about the high rate of untreated ear infections in Aboriginal children and how he plans to become a doctor. After reading Aiden’s *anglican focus* article I learnt that the inability of many Aboriginal parents to access healthcare to treat their children’s ear infections has many knock-on effects, including severe hearing loss, which can lead to children dropping out of school, which can then lead to children getting into trouble, which can then lead to the children being jailed.

Simply being welcoming and non-judgemental changed the life of the South Sudanese teenage boy. Ensuring that all children can access healthcare can also make a huge difference.

The saying “It takes a village to raise a child” comes from Africa. We all have a responsibility to ensure our young people thrive. So I commend this motion.

Editor’s note: This speech was given by Bishop Daniel Abot at the [Third Session of the Eighty-First Synod](#) of the Diocese of Brisbane on Saturday, 27 June 2026 as he seconded the carried “Jailing is Failing” motion, which was moved by Dr Stephen Harrison from the ACSQ Social Responsibilities Committee.

New online community for parish volunteers, clergy and employees serving in children's and youth ministry



"I look forward to gathering with parish volunteers, clergy and employees serving in children's and youth ministry online and collaborating in the "Pass It On" community," says Juliet Briner, AYCF Parish Support Officer (Image by anglican focus, June 2026)

Towards the end of the recent Pentecost service at Holy Trinity, Woolloongabba I noticed kids enthusiastically rush to the side of the church to collect the Holy Spirit kite for when they joined the clergy and ministry team in the recessional. This reminded me that when we intentionally involve children it gives them a sense of shared purpose and meaning — children are very important members of the church family.

I also recently met with Children's Lay Ministry Penny Howchin from St Andrew's, Springfield. It was her longing to be connected to our broader Diocesan community that reminded me why we all need to work together — sharing ideas, seeking feedback, celebrating achievements, and so on.

I started in my part-time Anglican Youth Children's and Family (AYCF) Parish Support Officer role about a year ago.

To update *anglican focus* readers, last year after (much-missed) Elissa Cotroneo moved on to other work in regional Queensland, her full-time position was split into two part-time roles — my position and Jordan Cuskelly's role as Anglican Young Adult Ministry Facilitator.

Previously AYCF was largely focused on centralised initiatives, such as organising Ichthus Camps. We have shifted our focus to supporting parishes at a local level.

Children and Youth Ministers are benefiting from this shift. Sometimes they just need a sounding board. Sometimes they need encouragement. Other times they need some advice and resources.

My primary tasks are to encourage, equip and resource parish volunteers and employees who are serving in children's and youth ministry, such as Children's Church teachers, Mainly Music and playgroup coordinators and youth group leaders, as well as stipendiary lay ministers.

This work includes:

- a bi-monthly newsletter (you can subscribe [online](#) to this newsletter)
- visiting different parishes mid-week or on Sundays
- consulting with and supporting children's and youth ministers one to one
- other initiatives, such as Pass It On.

The new AYCF "[Pass It On](#)" online community is commencing so we can connect, equip, share, encourage and pray for each other as we undertake the important work of sharing the Gospel of Jesus. There is no pressure to be an expert or to have the right words — it's simply an invitation for parish volunteers, clergy and employees serving in children's and youth ministry to journey together and be supported.

Hosted by me, this online group offers anyone engaged in children's and youth ministry in our Diocese, including volunteers, clergy and employees:

- Connection — a place to connect with others involved in children's and youth
- Prayer and spiritual support — an intentional space to pray for one another and remain grounded in God's presence.
- Resourcing and formation — access to experienced children's and youth ministry practitioners, who support the community through shared reflections, resources, and occasional workshops to strengthen ministry practice.
- Encouragement — opportunities to both give and receive encouragement, especially during busy liturgical or challenging seasons.
- Shared wisdom and stories — a place to share experiences, questions and insights, and to learn from one another.
- A safe and respectful environment — a space where people can speak honestly, listen deeply and support one another with care.

"Pass It On" will honour the diversity of ministry contexts, recognising that each setting is unique. Participants are encouraged to share from their own experience with humility, offering insights as a gift to others, and receiving what is shared with openness and grace.

The structure for each 60-minute online gathering will include a:

- brief welcome
- 20-minute workshop or other input from kids and teen ministry
- period of 15 minutes for questions
- shared space for 15 minutes
- period of prayer for 10 minutes (with the option to communicate prayer requests in the "chat" function)

The 2026 online dates, guest speakers and presentation themes are:

- Tuesday, 23 June from 12 noon to 1pm, with Jade Johnston speaking about “Using Music in Children’s Ministry” (Jade has specialised in children’s music for over 20 years).
- Thursday, 30 July from 7pm to 8pm, with The Rev’d Michael Stalley speaking about “Intergenerational Ministry” (Michael is an Anglican priest with significant experience in intergenerational faith formation).
- Tuesday, 25 August from 12 noon to 1pm, with Bettrys Lowe speaking about “Teaching the Bible to Children” (Bettrys is a Children’s and Families Minister at St Bart’s, Toowoomba).
- Monday, 21 September from 10.30am to 11.30am, with Judith Markland speaking about “Children’s Ministry: Grief and Bereavement” (Judith is a Lay Chaplain at the Queensland Children’s Hospital).
- Tuesday, 21 October from 12 noon to 1pm, with The Rev’d Tim Booth speaking about “Restorative Practice” (Tim is the Ministry Development Officer for the Anglican Church Southern Queensland).
- Monday, 23 November from 10.30am to 11.30am, with The Rev’d Tim Booth providing a Restorative Practice follow-up session.

[Psalm 145.4](#) says, “One generation commends your work to another; they tell of your mighty acts.”

So, as believers in Jesus, we have something revolutionary to share with those who are growing up in our Diocesan communities. I look forward to gathering with parish volunteers, clergy and employees serving in children’s and youth ministry online and collaborating in the “Pass It On” community.

Editor’s note: For more information or to register, please [email](#) Juliet Briner, Anglican Youth Children’s and Family (AYCF) Parish Support Officer.

Stunning stained-glass retrieved by Queensland WWI soldier from bombed medieval West Flanders cathedral installed in St Martin's House



The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt, The Anglican Dean of Brisbane; Janice Stevens, granddaughter of Sergeant James Young Garven; and, James Donaldson, Manager and Curator of the RD Milns Antiquities Museum at the University of Queensland, with the Ypres Glass Memorial at the dedication ceremony at St Martin's House on Sunday, 7 June 2026 (Image by anglican focus)

Four pieces of medieval cathedral stained-glass retrieved by a Brisbane WWI sapper from cathedral ruins in West Flanders have been ceremonially installed in the former St Martin's War Memorial Hospital on the St John's Cathedral precinct.

The glass fragments were retrieved from the site of the destroyed St Martin's Catholic Cathedral by Sandgate bricklayer [Sergeant James Young Garven](#) in early 1917 while fighting in West Flanders in the Ypres Salient.

Sergeant Garven kept the leadlight pieces in a small leather pouch, which was standard Australian Imperial Force (AIF) issue.



Sergeant James Young Garven served as a sapper in the 6th Field Company, Australian Engineers in the Australian Imperial Force (Image supplied by the Stevens family)

After Sergeant Garven was killed weeks later in France, 2nd Lieutenant Fred Garner Thorpe — later Sir Fred Thorpe — sent the pouch, containing the glass fragments, to Sergeant Garven's widow Jane, which remained in the family's possession until recently.

The shadow box memorial, which has been installed in St Martin's House on the St John's Cathedral precinct, includes the glass fragments mounted in a stressed French oak cross by local joiner Jack Barnes, along with the leather pouch and an inscription.

The four glass fragments include three blue and black circular pieces with a flower motif and a yellow square-shaped piece featuring an acanthus leaf motif.



The four stained-glass pieces, from St Martin's Cathedral ruins in West Flanders, include three blue and black circular pieces with a flower motif and a yellow square-shaped piece featuring an acanthus leaf motif — the pieces of stained glass are held within a cross, which is mounted in a shadow box, along with Sergeant James Young Garven's leather pouch, which he used to carry the stained glass after finding the glass fragments in the ruins of St Martin's Cathedral, Ypres, West Flanders in World War I (Image by *anglican focus*)

In June 2024 Sergeant Garven's granddaughter Janice Stevens offered the four glass fragments and the leather pouch to St John's Anglican Cathedral.

The Anglican Dean of Brisbane, The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt, who blessed the memorial in a dedication ceremony on Sunday, said that he gained consent from St Martin's Cathedral authorities in Ypres to display the glass.

"Before accepting the gift, the Cathedral sought to address questions of cultural ownership and consulted both Australian authorities and representatives of St Martin's Cathedral in Ypres," Dr Catt said.

"St Martin's expressed its support for the fragments being displayed in Brisbane as a memorial to those affected by the war, as well as an enduring legacy of the relationship formed during the war...

"It represents enduring memory, international cultural custodianship and cooperation, and the regeneration of hope and faith after profound loss."

Sunday's dedication ceremony was attended by 11 of Sergeant Garven's family members, aged two to over 90 years, including Brisbane-based Janice Stevens.

At the dedication ceremony Mrs Stevens said that she and her husband, Peter, found the glass fragments after her mother passed away.

"Ever since we found a box containing the glass in my mother's possessions Peter and I said that we must do something to preserve it," Mrs Stevens said.

"The glass has come a long way in distance and time, but now the story can be told, and anyone can see it.

"Today we are honouring James Young Garven, our grandfather — he was only 29 when he died."



Four generations of Sergeant James Young Garven's family, including granddaughter Janice Stevens, with the Ypres Glass Memorial at the dedication ceremony at St Martin's House on Sunday, 7 June 2026 (Image by *anglican focus*)

The Ypres Glass Memorial and the dedication ceremony were organised by St John's Cathedral honorary historian [Denzil Scrivens](#).

At the dedication ceremony Dr Catt read out a letter written by the president of the St Martin's Cathedral council, Alexander Declercq, to the St John's Cathedral community for the dedication ceremony.

"From St Martin's Cathedral in Ypres, we send our warm greetings as the Ypres Glass Memorial is unveiled," the letter said.

"These small fragments of stained glass have travelled a remarkable journey — from the ruins of our cathedral during the devastation of the First World War, through the care of Sergeant James Garven and his family, to their new home in Brisbane.

"They are a tangible reminder of the sacrifice of Australian soldiers who fought and fell in the Ypres Salient, and of the enduring bond between our two communities.

"We are grateful that these relics are preserved with dignity and remembrance, and that they continue to tell a story of loss, faith, reconciliation, and hope.

"May this memorial honour all who suffered in war and inspire future generations to cherish peace."

Five major battles were fought in the Ypres Salient between 1914 and 1918, with the most significant being the Third Battle of Ypres, commonly known as the [Battle of Passchendaele](#), in July to November 1917.

At Passchendaele alone the Allies suffered [275,000 casualties](#), including [38,000 Australians](#), with [nearly 500,000 casualties](#) suffered by the armies on both sides.

During WWI the town of Ypres was almost completely destroyed, including the gothic St Martin's Cathedral, named after St Martin of Tours and built between 1230 and 1370.



St Martin's Cathedral, Ypres, West Flanders was destroyed in World War I (Image by National Army Museum, UK)

Sergeant Garven served as a sapper in the [6th Field Company, Australian Engineers](#) in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

After leaving the Ypres Salient, Sergeant Garven fought at the [Battle of Lagnicourt](#) in northern France, where he was killed on 26 March 1917, aged 29.

He was mentioned in despatches and is buried in the Queant Road Cemetery, Buissy, France.

Manager and Curator of the [RD Milns Antiquities Museum at the University of Queensland](#) James Donaldson reflected on the significance of war-time relics during the dedication ceremony.

"We frequently see objects associated with deceased relatives take on part of their identity, particularly in the cases of war dead where the body was absent and it was unlikely any could ever visit the grave," Mr Donaldson said.

“Objects become the focal point of remembrance of absent loved ones, whether a photograph or a piece of always-polished trench art, or these fragments of glass.”

During the war, various relics from the ruins of St Martin’s Cathedral were “souvenired” by Allied soldiers.

Some of these are housed in institutions, including the [Imperial War Museum](#) in London and the [Australian War Memorial](#) in Canberra.

The Ypres Glass Memorial is displayed in the Darnell Room, the primary event and meeting room of St Martin’s House, where the St John’s Cathedral offices are based.

St Martin’s House shares the namesake of the Ypres’ Cathedral — St Martin of Tours, a former soldier from the 4th century who became a Roman Catholic bishop and is venerated as the patron saint of soldiers.

After World War I Ypres’ people voted to rebuild their town in its original image, including St Martin’s Cathedral, which was fully rebuilt in the Gothic style.

St Martin’s House — formerly known as “[St. Martin’s War Memorial Hospital](#)” — was completed in 1922.

The hospital was erected on Brisbane’s Ann St in memory of World War I servicemen and nurses who were killed in the war and for the treatment of returning soldiers and nurses.

The hospital was run by the Anglican Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent nuns until it was closed in 1971.

“Fr Neville Nixon’s quiet, steely determination and can-do, compassionate attitude were obvious”



The first time I encountered Fr Neville Nixon was over the phone around 20 years ago after I looked up “Anglican Aid Abroad” in the phone book. [Anglican Aid Abroad](#) is an international aid and development organisation and registered charity that Fr Nixon started in our Diocese 50 years ago. I explained that I was keen to volunteer one day a week. Fr Nixon’s response to my offer was, “You can go to Tanzania and visit the Anglican CMM (Community of St Mary) sisters for Anglican Aid Abroad!” So during my long service leave in 2008 I visited Tanzania and stayed with the sisters for three months to see projects that Anglican Aid Abroad was assisting with and to support the sisters.

Fr Nixon struck me as humble, softly spoken and passionate about caring for people who were economically marginalised. His quiet, steely determination and can-do, compassionate attitude were obvious. His faith and vision, together with his enthusiasm, brought dignity and hope to thousands. Sadly, Fr Nixon died recently.

When he started Anglican Aid Abroad Fr Nixon listened to the men and women in Anglican religious orders in the Pacific, initially, and then in Africa about the needs of the people they were serving. He trusted local people on the ground. This approach led to the establishment of schools and medical clinics. Long-term Anglican Aid Abroad work also includes agricultural projects so local people can generate income. For example, some funds from an agricultural project in Liberia led to the building of a primary school, which Anglican Aid Abroad also contributed directly to. Other [Anglican Aid Abroad](#) initiatives include funding bores; goat- and pig-rearing projects; a sewing project in Tonga; and, crisis response, including during the COVID period and in response to cyclones.

Fr Nixon’s example shows me the importance of listening to local people who best know their needs. Anglican Aid Abroad’s work has shown me that when people are self-sufficient they flourish and their dignity is upheld.

Editor's note: Anglican Aid Abroad is a registered charity that is administered by clergy and lay people in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland. To find out more about Anglican Aid Abroad or to donate, please visit the [Anglican Aid Abroad website](#).

Justice & Advocacy • Thursday 25 June 2026 • By Peter Branjerdporn

From Argentina's Maradona to Australia's Irankunda: Celebrating Refugee Week during a World Cup



Nestory Irankunda of Australia celebrates after winning the FIFA World Cup 2026 group stage match between Australia and Turkey at BC Place Stadium on June 13, 2026 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (Image by Alamy)

Some of us are old enough remember Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" during the quarter-final match of the 1986 FIFA World Cup between Argentina and England in Mexico City. I was nine years old at the time. Football (what some of us call "soccer" here in Australia) was how my friends and I at Bangkok Christian College spent every second of every break, and every boy wanted to play for Thailand.

In the early 90s my family moved to Brisbane where I found myself on the suburban high school football pitch with an international line-up each lunchtime. Our school team was made up of so many migrants and refugees from around the world, including Croatia, El Salvador, Greece, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka, that it felt like we were playing at the World Cup every week!

Today I still play football weekly, albeit in the comforts of a well-lit indoor court where a lot of busy dads and other men go to burn off any post-work stress and to keep fit. I love our team, Blackstar, not only because we have a lot of fun, but because of the different culture each one of us brings to the game.

My teammates have included a Palestinian Christian, whose family fled Palestine for Lebanon and whom I met at a vigil I helped organise for Gaza; a local West End filmmaker and barista with Indonesian and Thai heritage, and many others from Burundian, Vietnamese, Korean, Greek, Columbian and Cuban backgrounds.

I've found football to be such an amazing glue that binds people from different cultures together. I was reminded of this again recently when young Nestory Irankunda — a former refugee from Burundi whose family arrived here from a camp in Tanzania when he was three months old — [scored Australia's first goal at the 2026 FIFA World Cup](#).



"Today I still play football weekly, albeit in the comforts of a well-lit indoor court...I love our team, Blackstar, not only because we have a lot of fun, but because of the different culture each one of us brings to the game," says Peter Branjerdporn from the ACSQ Justice Unit (Image supplied)

Australia's national football team has been a multi-cultural team for a while now. Nestory's idol Tim Cahill — arguably Australia's all-time best football player, who scored two goals at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil — is of Samoan background. Today there are [at least 15 cultural and ethnic backgrounds](#) represented in the Socceroos' current 26-man squad.

At a time when exploitative politicians here and internationally are [scoring career points out of racist and anti-immigration rhetoric](#) it was especially joyful for me as a son of immigrants to celebrate Nestory's goal, and to see Australia's win on the world stage.

Diversity is what makes Australia an amazing country. The Socceroos are a reflection of modern Australia where nearly one in three are born overseas — all working together in harmony for a common goal. And the young men from migrant and refugee backgrounds in our national men's team have been able to achieve their dreams because of the wonderful support they have received from the communities who embrace them.

Still, I think we should be cautious — let's proudly celebrate the success stories of refugees and migrants in Australia knowing, however, that they shouldn't have to achieve world-class sport-star status just to be accepted and treated with dignity and respect. Nestory is just as deserving of God's love and our love and care even if he couldn't kick a ball.

During future Refugee Weeks, and every other week, may we continue to create a safe space for each person to be who they are fully, flourishing as a child of God. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus himself was a refugee, Mary and Joseph fleeing Bethlehem to Egypt. May we welcome all people who are seeking safety, peace and freedom and a welcoming, colourful, multicultural team to belong to, from across the seas.

Editor's note 25 June 2026: This feature piece was updated with an additional image.

Synod presidential address 2026: Archbishop Jeremy Greaves



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves giving his presidential address at the Third Session of the Eighty-First Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane on Saturday, 27 June 2026 at Churchie (Image by anglican focus)

Welcome to this Third Session of the Eighty-First Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane.

Not long after Christmas I decided to catch the ferry into the Diocesan Office.

By ferry, it is a 45-minute trip into the city, winding along the river between buildings — it's a great chance to listen to a podcast, read over some emails that have arrived over night or simply watch the river go by. This particular morning as I sat, I became aware of someone "hovering" next to me. After a few moments I looked up, to be met by the gaze of a young boy who said, "Excuse me, sir, but are you the Archbishop?"

There began a 30-minute conversation about his Christmas holidays and everything he had done, and he wanted to know all about my Christmas and my holidays and what presents I'd got and what we'd had for Christmas lunch...and Paddy!

Eventually it was time for me to get off. As I stood and said goodbye, the young man looked me in the eye, shook my hand firmly and said, "God bless you, Archbishop."

It was a rare moment of clarity and simplicity amidst all the things that fill my diary: an uncomplicated encounter with someone who wanted nothing more from me than some conversation and my presence.

It is a moment that I return to regularly: a momentary reminder of the way grace can break into our lives with remarkable clarity and simplicity...a reminder that beneath all of the complexity that fills our

lives, our Church and our world, lies something remarkably simple: the invitation to life in abundance through the grace of God that endlessly breaks into our world.

Yet it is increasingly clear that we are attempting to respond to that invitation in an age of profound complexity: an age of “wicked problems” where some matters are inherently resistant to agreed-upon solutions. They require multiple voices and approaches.

Christianity was born in complexity

We sometimes speak as though complexity is a modern thing. It is not. Christianity itself emerged in a world of political occupation, social upheaval and theological disagreement.

The first followers of Jesus lived at the intersection of competing cultures, identities and loyalties. They were Jews living under Roman occupation. They navigated tensions between faith and empire, tradition and change, local belonging and global influence. Questions of power, identity, justice and truth were not abstract ideas for them; they were daily realities.

Even the earliest Church was far from uniform.

The Book of Acts records vigorous disagreements about who belonged, what faithfulness required, and how the gospel should be lived. The Council of Jerusalem wrestled with one of the defining questions of the early Church: whether Gentile converts should be required to adopt Jewish customs and practices. Faithful disciples reached different conclusions before arriving at a way forward through prayer, listening and discernment.

The letters of Paul reveal communities struggling with division, conflict, leadership, ethics, theology and cultural change. Corinth wrestled with questions of authority and community life. Galatia debated the relationship between law and grace. Rome brought together Jewish and Gentile Christians whose experiences of faith were often profoundly different.

Likewise, within the rest of the New Testament we hear a diversity of voices. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each tell the story of Jesus in distinctive ways. James and Paul approach some questions differently. Revelation offers a vision of faithfulness under pressure that differs markedly in style and tone from the pastoral letters. The unity of the New Testament is not found in uniformity, but in its common witness to Jesus Christ.

Nor did complexity disappear after the apostolic age.

For the first few centuries of the infant Church there was no agreed New Testament canon, no universally accepted creed and no settled organisational structure. Christian communities emerged in different places, with different structures, speaking different languages and facing different challenges. The Church we know today emerged gradually through centuries of prayer, disagreement, conflict, discernment and encounter with the Holy Spirit.

The Church has always lived with complexity.

Indeed, some of the most significant moments of renewal in Christian history emerged during periods of uncertainty and upheaval. New forms of mission, ministry and discipleship have often appeared not when the Church felt most secure, but when it was forced to listen again for the voice of God in changing circumstances.

Complexity, then, is not an interruption to Christian faith. It is one of the places where faith has always been formed.

The question before us is not whether complexity exists. The question is what complexity will produce in us. Will it make us fearful or faithful? Defensive or discerning? Fragmented or more deeply committed to one another in Christ?

This current age of complexity

Difficult problems, while demanding, are often ultimately solvable. They require expertise, hard work, careful planning and perseverance. We may not immediately know the answer, but we trust that with enough skill and determination a solution can eventually be found.

Complex problems are different.

Complex problems cannot simply be solved by technical expertise alone, because they involve human relationships, competing values, histories, fears, cultures and emotions. In complex situations, every action changes the environment itself. There are rarely perfect solutions, and unintended consequences are almost inevitable. Complexity requires less certainty and more discernment. It calls not only for strategy, but for wisdom.

And one of the defining features of complex systems is emergence.

In complex environments, new realities often emerge that could not have been fully predicted at the beginning. Change does not always happen in a straight line. Sometimes small actions have unexpectedly large consequences. Sometimes periods of disruption give rise to new possibilities, relationships or ways of seeing that only become visible over time.

The Church itself has always lived with emergence, even if we have not always used that language.

The early Church emerged from a frightened and uncertain group gathered after the crucifixion: it lacked a single canon, set of beliefs or organisational structure for much of the first two hundred years after the death of Jesus. Early followers of the Way formed a “kaleidoscope” of independent gatherings rather than one organised religion, and Christianity as we know it emerged out of this diverse movement.

The great missionary movements of Christian history often emerged at moments of instability and social change. Renewal frequently comes not when institutions feel strongest or most secure, but when people are forced to listen again for the movement of the Spirit in unfamiliar circumstances.

That does not mean every change is good, nor that discernment no longer matters. But it does mean we should be cautious about assuming that faithfulness is the same thing as control.

Much of what confronts us in the world and as a Diocese and as a Church today belongs in this complex and emergent space.

Questions about identity, trust, authority, mission, culture, governance, inclusion, discipleship and institutional change are not merely technical matters waiting for the right policy or process or amendments to particular laws or Canons. They involve people’s deepest convictions and experiences. They require us to move carefully, prayerfully and humbly.

In such a climate, there is always a temptation to retreat into defensiveness or certainty, to imagine that strength lies in drawing sharper lines, speaking more loudly, or simplifying difficult questions.

So much public discourse seems to fall into this trap, with politicians and commentators shouting over each other, creating false binaries and suggesting simplistic answers to complex problems. It has been said that for every complex and difficult problem there is always a perfectly reasonable and simple solution that is wrong.

So often careful discernment and nuance are replaced by slogans as a response to complex issues: “Adult time for adult crime!” “Stop mass migration!” “Scrap net zero.” — all shouted ever more loudly as if this will solve everything.

Complexity as an invitation to humility, patience, discernment and hope

For the Church, complexity calls for a different posture from certainty or despair. It invites humility, patience, discernment and hope. It reminds us that leadership is less about possessing all the answers and more about helping communities remain faithful amid uncertainty.

This is where the Anglican Church may offer something important to the world in which we find ourselves.

In a world tempted by ideological certainty and tribal division, an Anglican approach to faith offers practices of listening, discernment, theological humility and sustained communion across difference. It encourages us to trust that truth is discovered not merely through winning arguments, but through prayerful engagement with Scripture, tradition, reason, experience and one another.

As Rowan Williams has observed, the Church is called not to provide an escape from complexity but to become a community where complexity can be inhabited faithfully: confident in God’s presence even when the path ahead is not entirely clear.

[He says](#), “If we had to choose between a Church tolerably confident of what it has to say and seeking only for effective means of saying it, and a Church constantly engaged in an internal dialogue and critique of itself, an exploration to discover what is central to its being, I should say that it is the latter which is the more authentic — a Church which understands that part of what it is offering to humanity is the possibility of living in such a mode.”

For Christians, complexity is not ultimately a threat to faith. It is one of the places where faith learns to trust.

As I said earlier, the complexity we experience *within* the Church does not arise in isolation. It reflects the complexity of the world in which we live.

Across Australia and around the globe, many of the assumptions that shaped public life for much of the twentieth century are being challenged. Institutions that once seemed stable now feel fragile. Trust has become harder to sustain. Public debate often appears more polarised. Many people experience uncertainty about the future.

While the issues are many, I want to explore three significant drivers of this uncertainty: fragmentation, disruption and belonging.

Fragmentation

One of the defining features of our age is fragmentation.

The rise of social media and digital communication has brought extraordinary opportunities for connection and access to information. Yet it has also transformed how we understand truth, authority and community. Many people now inhabit entirely different information ecosystems. We increasingly encounter news, commentary and opinion that reinforce our existing assumptions rather than challenges them.

Public discourse often rewards strident claims regarding certainty over wisdom, and outrage over nuance. Complex questions are reduced to slogans. Political opponents become enemies. Disagreement is treated as betrayal.

We see this in debates about immigration, climate policy, reconciliation, housing, taxation, identity, religion and countless other issues. The temptation is always to divide the world into opposing camps: right and wrong, faithful and faithless, us and them.

Yet human beings and human societies are rarely so simple.

The challenge before us is not merely to choose sides in every debate, but to cultivate the patience and humility necessary to listen deeply, think carefully and engage generously.

Disruption

Alongside fragmentation, we are living through a period of profound disruption.

The pace of technological change is extraordinary. Artificial intelligence, automation, biotechnology and digital communication are reshaping our workplaces, our schools, our relationships and even our understanding of what it means to be human.

Climate change continues to reshape economies, communities and ecosystems. Extreme weather events, changing environmental conditions and the transition to new energy systems create challenges that touch every level of society.

Economic uncertainty remains a daily reality for many Australians. Housing affordability, cost-of-living pressures and growing inequality affect not only material wellbeing, but also people's sense of security and hope.

These challenges do not exist separately from one another. They interact in ways that are often difficult to predict. A technological decision affects employment. An environmental challenge affects migration. Economic pressures influence political behaviour. Every intervention creates new consequences.

This is the nature of complexity.

Belonging

Perhaps beneath all these questions lies an even deeper issue: the human longing for belonging.

Despite unprecedented levels of connectivity, many people describe themselves as lonely. Traditional sources of identity and community have weakened. Fewer people participate in neighbourhood organisations, civic groups and religious communities than in previous generations.

Questions of belonging sit beneath many of our most contested debates. They shape conversations about migration and national identity. They shape discussions about reconciliation with First Nations peoples. They influence how communities respond to rapid social and cultural change.

The debate following the Voice Referendum, conversations about constitutional recognition, truth telling and Closing the Gap all reveal how deeply Australians continue to wrestle with questions of history, identity and belonging.

These are not merely political questions. They are profoundly human questions.

They are questions about who we are, where we belong and what kind of society we wish to become.

The Church's calling

It would be easy to respond to this complexity with either fear or with certainty.

Yet neither response is particularly Christian.

The Church is not called to escape complexity, nor to pretend that every problem has a simple solution.

And while faithful people from more conservative and more progressive parts of the tradition so often seem to think that by hardening the boundaries, being more and more clear about who is “in” and who is “out,” or simply by shouting louder than the other we’ll find a way through the complex problems by which we are beset.

It seems to me that we are called to be communities of discernment, hope and reconciliation. We are called to create spaces where people can encounter one another with dignity, where difficult conversations can be held honestly, and where difference need not result in division.

In a complex world, the Christian vocation may be less about providing easy answers and more about helping people live faithfully amid uncertainty, trusting that God remains present and active even when the path ahead is not entirely clear.

Comprehensiveness and complexity

For a number of years in this Diocese we have used the language of comprehensiveness to describe a way of being that leans into complexity and can help us navigate the tensions between inheritance and innovation, conviction and humility, unity and diversity, and to do so with theological rigour and pastoral generosity. Despite using this language for some years, there is still much misunderstanding about what we might mean when we use it.

Yet, in a time when so much discourse within and outside the Church is marked by polarisation and exclusion, a commitment to Anglican comprehensiveness offers a different path and a distinctive witness. It calls us to remain in conversation, to honour the dignity of those with whom we disagree and to trust that the Spirit continues to lead us into deeper truth.

It suggests, as [Peter Carnley has written](#) recently, that “the theological quest is a matter of ‘faith seeking understanding’ [rather than] the illusory pursuit of an alleged objective certainty in the apparent hope that it will close off all inquiry through the confident articulation of a set of inerrant and infallible assertions.”

Comprehensiveness — grounded in the essentials of faith, but with legitimate diversity

Anglican Comprehensiveness, which invites us to engage the other with curiosity, as we seek to “comprehend,” is grounded in the essentials of faith — Scripture, the Creeds, the sacraments and the historic orders of ministry — always working to discern between what is fundamental for the Church’s life and those matters on which faithful Christians may differ. While this will always mean we have work to do, it also means that we inhabit a Church that is both deeply rooted in the tradition while being responsive to its context, always discerning where and how the Spirit is calling us next.

In a book to be released during General Synod this year, Bishop Stephen Pickard writes that:

“Authentic Anglican Christianity is characterized by its value of ‘unity in essentials, liberty in doubt, and charity in all things.’ This means that within the essential parameters of the creeds, the scriptures, the sacraments and the threefold ministry, a legitimate diversity and practice exists amongst Anglicans. This diversity has made Anglicanism a rich and unique synthesis of catholic, evangelical, liberal, charismatic and contemplative traditions of Christianity [which] make for generous orthodoxy; a liberality in thought; and affirm a fidelity to the gospel and the church’s mission.” (August 2026, *A True and Lively Faith: Short Essays on Some Contested Matters in Anglican Christianity in Australia*, Volume 1, Coventry Books, Melbourne)

At the Lambeth Conference of Bishops in 1968 the bishops wished to give some clarity to what it might mean to describe Anglican Comprehensiveness. They said:

“Comprehensiveness is an attitude of mind which Anglicans have learned from the thought-provoking controversies of their history... Comprehensiveness demands agreement on fundamentals, while tolerating disagreement on matters in which Christians may differ without...breaking communion. In the mind of an Anglican, comprehensiveness is not compromise. Nor is it to bargain one truth for another...Rather it implies that the apprehension of truth is a growing thing: we only gradually succeed in ‘knowing the truth’. It has been the tradition of Anglicanism to contain within one body both Protestant and Catholic elements. But there is a continuing search for the whole truth in which these elements will find complete reconciliation. Comprehensiveness implies a willingness to allow liberty of interpretation, with a certain slowness in arresting or restraining exploratory thinking. We need to applaud the wisdom of the Rabbi Gamaliel’s dictum that if a thing is not of God it will not last very long (Acts 5:38-9). Moreover we are alarmed by the sad experience of too hasty condemnation in the past (as is the case of Galileo). For we believe that in leading us into the truth the Holy Spirit may have some surprises in store for us in the future as [he] *sic.* has had in the past.” (Lambeth Conference 1968, p.140-41).

The bishops were careful to insist that comprehensiveness is not simply a matter of splitting the difference. It is not bargaining one truth for another, nor pretending that disagreements do not matter. Rather, it is grounded in the conviction that our grasp of the truth is always growing and that the Church comes to deeper understanding over time through prayer, study, experience and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Such an approach requires humility. It demands the courage to hold

convictions strongly while recognising that no individual, party, movement, or generation possesses the fullness of God's truth.

It is an approach to faith that feels particularly important in this age of complexity. This approach has much to offer a Church that so often gives in to the temptation to divide everything between winners and losers, orthodox and unorthodox, faithful and faithless. It speaks helpfully into a season when many of the questions confronting the Church today are not merely difficult problems to be solved; they are complex realities to be navigated. They involve history, culture, theology, pastoral experience, and the lived realities of human beings made in the image of God.

Complexity and comprehensiveness

The Anglican Church of Australia certainly knows something of these tensions. We have wrestled, and continue to wrestle, with questions concerning human sexuality, the blessing of same-sex relationships, the place of women in ordained ministry and episcopal leadership, the legacy of abuse and institutional failure, the future of parish life in a changing society, relationships with First Nations peoples, and the challenge of proclaiming the gospel in an increasingly secular culture. Across our dioceses, and within our Dioceses, faithful Anglicans often arrive at different conclusions on these matters, oftentimes with deep conviction and genuine theological integrity.

In such circumstances, comprehensiveness can appear untidy and frustrating. It can feel easier to seek purity through separation; than communion through disagreement. It is tempting to move more and more to being a confessional church where membership depends on signing up to particular declarations, or to unilaterally declare that we hold all of the truth and those "others" do not and so we cannot be "in communion" with them.

Yet the Anglican tradition invites us to ask whether unity in Christ might be deeper than uniformity of opinion. It challenges us to distinguish between those matters that lie at the heart of the gospel and those where faithful Christians may continue to discern differently while remaining members of one body.

[Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani](#), the bishop of Chelmsford in the Church of England recently reflected on tensions within the Church in dealing with those we might name as "other" or stranger. She wrote:

"I'm reminded of the need for us to be able to hold on to the contradictions and to live at the heart of the paradox — just like the space between Martin Buber's I and Thou. To see the face of Christ in the stranger draws out of us a giving and a receiving; it is both/and, not either/or." She goes on, "Richard Rohr, in writing about the cross, explores the tensions and intersections of the two sides of all human dilemmas: 'divine and human; matter and spirit; male and female: good thief and bad thief'. He says, 'when you try and hold the contraries together you will always be crucified' and goes on, 'we are supposed to be the people who hang on the contraries, who hold the dilemmas that life presents us with and suffer them. Now you have the meaning of the cross. You absorb the tension, you don't release it...you hold it'."

As Richard Rohr suggests, living with complex tensions clearly does not mean avoiding hard conversations. Nor does it mean that every position is equally persuasive or equally faithful. Rather, it means creating space for discernment rather than demanding immediate certainty. It means resisting the impulse to caricature those with whom we disagree. It means believing that the Holy Spirit is at work not only in those who think as we do, but also in those whose perspectives challenge our own. It

means holding “the dilemmas that life presents us with,” “absorbing the tension” and finding something of Christ in that place.

The Lambeth bishops warned against the Church’s history of hasty condemnations and premature certainty: it’s a warning that we should take to heart still. The Church has sometimes mistaken confidence for faithfulness and certainty for truth. Yet history repeatedly reminds us that God’s future often arrives from unexpected directions.

Perhaps this is one of the gifts comprehensive Anglicanism offers the wider Christian Church in this moment. We are inheritors of a tradition that seeks to hold together Scripture, reason, and tradition; catholicity and reform; conviction and humility; unity and diversity. We do not always do this well. At times we fail one another, wound one another, or retreat into our own camps. Yet at its best, Anglican comprehensiveness witnesses to a profound theological truth: that communion is possible even amid difference because our unity is ultimately grounded not in agreement about everything, but in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The challenge before us is to discern how we will continue to live together while we continue to think, pray and wrestle with complex questions.

In an age that increasingly rewards division, perhaps one of our most important callings is to model a different way: a community marked by deep conviction, generous listening, patient discernment, and enduring hope.

For as the Lambeth bishops observed nearly sixty years ago, the Holy Spirit may yet have “some surprises in store for us.” Faithfulness may require us not only to speak the truth we know, but also to remain open to the truth God has not yet fully revealed. In that spirit, Anglican comprehensiveness is not a weakness to be defended. It is a gift to be cherished in an increasingly complex age.

The Anglican Church of Australia

There are particular questions for the Anglican Church of Australia at this time.

How does a national Church maintain genuine communion when one theological tradition increasingly dominates its representative structures? How are the voices of smaller dioceses, First Nations Anglicans, regional communities, differing theological traditions and minority perspectives heard and valued? How can influence be exercised in ways that strengthen rather than diminish mutual trust?

These questions become even more acute when the Church is wrestling with contested issues such as human sexuality, episcopal authority, lay leadership, theological education, church planting, diocesan autonomy and relationships within the broader Anglican Communion. In such circumstances, decisions are rarely experienced as merely procedural. They are interpreted through existing concerns about identity, power, belonging and theological conviction.

When Anglicare Sydney recently announced it had acquired aged care provider Infinite Care, a residential aged care provider, operating 18 facilities in QLD, NSW, VIC and SA, breaking a long-held agreement amongst bishops about how agencies might operate across diocesan boundaries, the CEO of Anglicare Sydney was surprised by the reaction from Anglicare Australia and other Anglicares around the country. A decision Anglicare Sydney said was purely commercial, was received by others

with suspicion and cynicism in a national Church climate where the Diocese of Sydney has clearly articulated an agenda over many years to colonise the rest of the Church.

In September 2022, in a speech to the Anglican Church League in Sydney, then [Archbishop Glenn Davies articulated](#) this agenda most clearly when he offered this challenge to his audience:

“what Sydney does best is to continue to proclaim Christ and to do so far and wide without fear and without favour and so therefore we need to continue to populate the country with lay people and clergy. If you really care for Australia we want to send our best clergy, and where you’ve got welcoming bishops let’s do that...we need to populate, and not just with clergy, lay people too, we need to populate and we need to pray that people will find opportunities to move outside of Sydney and to do so.”

This is precisely where the language of Anglican comprehensiveness is in tension with some other expressions of Anglicanism. The 1968 Lambeth statement reminds us that comprehensiveness is not the victory of one party over another, nor the suppression of difference for the sake of institutional peace. It is a commitment to remain in conversation while seeking together a fuller apprehension of truth. Such a vision assumes that no single tradition within Anglicanism, whether evangelical, catholic, charismatic, liberal or progressive, possesses the whole of the Church’s wisdom.

Paul Avis has often argued that Anglican ecclesiology depends upon a culture of mutual listening and reciprocal recognition. He says that the Church is healthiest when its different traditions are able to enrich, challenge and correct one another. A communion in which one voice effectively ceases to need the others, risks losing something of the Anglican vocation itself.

At the same time, complexity requires resisting simplistic narratives. The challenge facing the Anglican Church of Australia is not simply “Sydney versus everyone else” — such framing quickly becomes polarising and obscures the reality that there is considerable diversity within Sydney itself and within other dioceses. Nor is the challenge solved merely by changing voting formulas or constitutional arrangements in the national Church. Structural reforms may sometimes be necessary, but they do not by themselves create trust, generosity or communion.

The deeper question is whether the Anglican Church of Australia can continue to cultivate a culture in which influence is exercised with humility, disagreement is conducted charitably, and all dioceses understand themselves as participants in a shared mission rather than competitors for control. The issue is not whether one group wins more votes. The issue is whether the national Church can sustain a genuinely catholic life in which different voices remain at the table and continue to discern together the movement of the Holy Spirit.

This reality is not confined to the Anglican Communion or the Anglican Church of Australia. We experience it every day within the life of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

Complexity in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland

Many of the issues before us in this Diocese are not simply difficult problems awaiting technical solutions: they are complex challenges. They involve multiple stakeholders, competing values, incomplete information, deeply held convictions, and consequences that cannot always be predicted in advance.

We see this in our continuing work to strengthen governance and accountability. Good governance matters profoundly. Yet governance is never merely about constitutions, regulations, committees or reporting structures. It is also about culture, trust, relationships, authority, transparency and the wise exercise of power. Structural reform in the Diocese is absolutely necessary, but robust structures alone cannot create healthy communities. The deeper work is the formation of a culture in which responsibility is shared, accountability is embraced and trust is rebuilt where it has been diminished.

We see complexity also in the human resource matters with which we are dealing. Questions of leadership, performance, wellbeing, conflict resolution and psychological safety cannot be reduced to policies and procedures alone. Every situation involves human stories, competing perspectives and pastoral realities. Justice, compassion, accountability and grace must all find their place in the conversation: sadly, this is not always the case.

We encounter similar complexity in our response to changing patterns of church attendance and religious affiliation across the diocese. Reflecting what is happening more broadly across Australia, inherited assumptions about churchgoing no longer hold. Yet the picture is far from uniform. Some communities are declining, others are growing. New forms of ministry are emerging while traditional patterns of ministry and worship remain important for many people. The challenge is not simply how to preserve what has been, nor how to abandon it in favour of what is new. Rather, it is how to discern where the Spirit is already at work and how we might join in God's mission in a rapidly changing society.

Recently in Bundaberg, I joined in the celebrations of 150 years since the dedication of the first Anglican Church in that community. It was a wonderful celebration of all that has been over the past 150 years. In my sermon I asked those present, "What are we building for those who come after us?" and then offered this challenge, "...churches are often tempted to become curators of the past rather than creators of the future. It is easy to become guardians of memory. It is harder to become stewards of possibility. The Church exists not to preserve itself. The Church exists to participate in God's mission. And God's mission is always directed towards the future."

I reminded the people of Bundaberg that those people who built the first Anglican church in Bundaberg 150 years ago were not looking backwards — they were looking forwards: faithfully, hopefully, expectantly.

In a recent interview, former Archbishop of Canterbury [Rowan Williams reflected](#) on how we might better govern the Church in this age of complexity,

"We're not told to make it work." he said, "We're told to be faithful and to trust in God. Now, within that there are strategies that are more or less sensible, more or less constructive. But the more we're imprisoned by the notion of whether we are making the kind of difference we're wanting to be seen to be making — the more that prevails, the less room there is for God to be God."

"Very often the truth is that gentle growth does happen where there's manifest commitment and dedication. And it doesn't always show up in the statistics as we might want it to. I worry about a church too preoccupied with strategy, with schemes for solving problems and not quite enough preoccupied with its own integrity as a community of witness and prayer."

"...a community of witness and prayer..." seeking to comprehend, faithfully, hopefully and expectantly where the Spirit is calling us is central to our calling.

This year we have continued a review of our broader governance structure. In the first instance this will bring clarity to delegations and responsibilities as defined by our current Canons. One of the next steps in the work will be to explore alternative governance structures as we continue to seek how to best operate in a complex space where government legislation has increasing requirements of us that we are challenged to meet under our current structures.

How we manage our property and finance present another set of complex questions. We are stewards of resources entrusted to us by previous generations for the proclamation of the gospel. Decisions about buildings, land, investment and expenditure often involve competing priorities: heritage and mission, local identity and diocesan responsibility, present needs and future opportunities. Such decisions are rarely straightforward. They require wisdom, courage and a willingness to hold the long-term flourishing of the Church alongside the needs of current communities.

In recent months we have begun a cross-commission project with schools, parishes and Anglicare, on the Gold Coast, looking at what property we own, what might be surplus to requirements and where there are gaps: it is part of a much bigger project, doing similar work across the whole of the diocese. Mindful of the complexity of the relationships between the commissions, the way assets are held on our balance sheets, and the changing needs of schools, parishes and Anglicare, and with a view to the mission of the Church, the work will enable us to make better decisions about the use, sale or purchase of land into the future.

And, of course, as a Diocese we continue to live with the creative tensions that have long characterised Anglicanism itself. Within the Anglican Church Southern Queensland there are evangelicals, anglo-catholics, charismatics, liberals and those who do not feel they fit neatly into any category. There are differing views on theology, liturgy, ethics and the future direction of the Church. At times these differences can be a source of frustration. Yet they can also be a gift. They remind us that the Church is larger than any one perspective and that none of us possesses the whole truth of God.

This is precisely where the vision of Anglican comprehensiveness remains so valuable and why I think it is worth persisting with in this diocese. It encourages us to resist both the temptation to uniformity and the temptation to fragmentation. It calls us to remain in conversation, to listen before we judge, to hold convictions with humility and to trust that the Holy Spirit continues to lead the Church into truth.

What kind of Church are we becoming?

The question before us is, therefore, not simply how we solve a series of organisational challenges. The deeper question is what kind of Church we are becoming as we face them. Will we retreat ever more into factions and certainties, or will we embrace the harder work of communion? Will we seek control, or will we seek wisdom? Will we see complexity as a threat, or as an invitation to deeper trust in the God who remains faithful amid uncertainty?

Leading in and through this season

In all of this, leadership is complex too. What does it mean to lead in an age of complexity?

As I reflect on how I might wish to lead I return to two things.

Not long after I was made a bishop, the now Dean of Southwark, Mark Oakley said to me that while the old language speaks of bishops as being a focus for unity, he wondered what it might mean for the Church if bishops were a focus for integrity. I strive to lead with integrity.

And I am reminded again of Rowan Williams' words, "I worry about a Church too preoccupied with strategy, with schemes for solving problems and not quite enough preoccupied with its own integrity as a community of witness and prayer."

While so many decisions that I make are made for the sake of expediency or the budget or the risk appetite statement or as a compromise to one thing or another, I feel it keenly when my integrity is compromised by these things, or when the integrity of the Church is compromised by the decisions we make.

Some of the things that weigh most heavily on me are the things that compromise my integrity or the integrity of Christ's Church.

Leading with integrity is something I strive to do, but so is leading with authenticity.

"This" is all that I bring to this role. "This" and a sense that by the grace of God and sustained by the prayers of so many people, I am in the right place. And while there are plenty of days when I don't feel like "this" is enough, I get up and I show up and I do those things as faithfully and as lovingly as I am able.

After two and a half years I continue to learn and to grow into this role, and hope that I will do so as long as I hold this office.

Leading with integrity and authenticity is the best I can offer in this complex age, and frustratingly for many this kind of leadership is less about providing certainty and hopefully more about trying to cultivate space for discernment. It is less about winning arguments and more about trying to help us navigate uncertainty faithfully. It requires patience when answers are not immediately apparent, courage when difficult decisions must be made, and hope when the future feels unclear.

The Culture Project

Early this year as I reflected on where the integrity of the Diocese might be compromised, I engaged Complexability to work with Diocesan staff on a "Culture Project" that seeks to name and then address concerns raised by a number of people across ACSQ about their work environment. [Complexability describes](#) their approach like this: "Navigating complexity is not solutions based; it's a direction of travel. Options and opportunities are context specific. Learning from others is valuable; replication fails. Multiple perspectives and valuing diversity are essential. Seeking consensus too quickly reduces the field of possibilities. Learning from doing, which includes learning what doesn't work, is essential."

It is an approach that seems to align with what I have already said about comprehensiveness and complexity.

From the outset, I made a deliberate choice to take a different approach in addressing some of the concerns raised with me by Diocesan staff — one that is both inclusive and comprehensive — to explore three core areas:

- The obligations and expectations that shape our workplace

- What is currently working well
- Where there is a need for action

Diocesan staff have been invited to contribute in a variety of ways: through online surveys, through written contributions and through small group feedback sessions. While there are staff who have been very reticent about participating, there has been a good response and, overwhelmingly, the feedback and contributions have been constructive and forward looking.

The next stage of the Culture Project will be for an Implementation Team to take the findings and to discern how to move us further along the road to truly reflecting the values we espouse.

Restorative Practices

In an age of increasing complexity, the health of the Church will depend less on our ability to avoid conflict and more on our ability to navigate it well. Restorative Practices offer us practical tools grounded in deeply Christian convictions: that every person bears God's image, that relationships matter, that truth is best spoken in community, and that reconciliation remains possible even after harm has occurred. If we are to be a Church capable of holding difference, addressing harm, and discerning God's future together, then building restorative capacity may be one of the most important leadership investments we can make.

This year we have facilitated the training of a second cohort of clergy and lay leaders in Restorative Practices. My hope is that we will continue to train people in coming years and that these practices will become embedded in the life of the Diocese at every level as we seek to navigate conflict and complexity.

A new Commission

I commend to you the work that has been done over the past 18 months to think about how we might best resource people and parishes for mission and ministry in this next season of our life together with all of its complexity. The amendments to the Diocesan Governance Canon that will come before you this Synod propose the creation of a new commission: the "Ministry Development Commission."

The commission will bring together a number of different people and programmes, tasked with providing direction and leadership in "equipping, supporting and empowering people and communities for the flourishing of faith communities."

This new commission will focus on:

- Forming, educating and supporting clergy and laity;
- Strengthening the current and future leadership of faith communities;
- Providing accessible and contextually-grounded theological education;
- Supporting faith communities to cultivate belonging, outreach, and partnership within and beyond their communities;
- Serving as a catalyst for faithful innovation in mission and ministry across the Diocese.

Parishes Regulation Canon

Another piece of work that is in its infancy is a review of the Parishes Regulation Canon.

It is some years since there has been a wholesale review of our Canons: to do that again is a mammoth task, but we need to begin somewhere. The Parishes Regulation Canon is both one of the longest Canons and the most often used and, like a parish filing cabinet, has been added to regularly over the years without removing anything much at all. The Canon assumes much about parishes and clergy appointments that are no longer true and does not give the flexibility that we might need as we explore and experiment with new expressions of mission and ministry.

The Rev'd Canon Gary Harch has begun a process of consultation with clergy and others, as well as a review of similar Canons in other Dioceses with a view to a new Canon being brought to Synod in 2027. Rather than trying to amend the current Canon, it is most likely that we will consider a much simpler replacement Canon at our next Synod.

These projects, alongside all of the “business as usual” work of the Church all seek to assist the diocese in this age of complexity.

Back to the ferry

Ever since that conversation on the ferry in January, I have often reflected on the young boy who simply wanted to talk. He did not ask about governance structures, constitutional reform, diocesan commissions, budgets, theological controversies or strategic plans. He wanted to know about Christmas, holidays, presents and Paddy. He simply wanted authentic, honest engagement and to offer me a blessing.

In many ways, that encounter has become a parable for me. Beneath all the complexity we navigate as a Diocese lies something remarkably simple: our calling to participate in the Kingdom of God with authenticity and honesty and to be a blessing to the people we encounter in this particular corner of the world.

We exist to proclaim the gospel, to worship God, to serve our neighbours, to form disciples and to bear witness to God's reconciling love in the world. Complexity changes how we pursue that calling, but it does not change the calling itself.

As we gather in Synod this year, we do so at a time when many institutions are anxious, many communities are divided, and many people are searching for hope. Our task is not to have all the answers. Our task is not to control every outcome. As Rowan Williams reminds us, we are not told to make it work; we are told to be faithful.

So may we be a Diocese marked by integrity rather than ideology; by discernment rather than simple certainty; by restoration rather than recrimination; by courage rather than fear; and by hope rather than despair. May we have the patience to live faithfully with complexity, the humility to listen deeply to one another, and the confidence to trust that the Holy Spirit is still at work among us.

The future of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland will not ultimately be secured by our structures, our strategies or even our successes. It will be shaped by the faithfulness with which we follow Jesus Christ together.

And so, in this age of complexity, let us move forward with courage and generosity, attentive to one another, open to the surprises of the Spirit, and confident that the God who has led this Diocese thus far is not finished with us yet.

This address was given by Archbishop Jeremy Greaves at the Third Session of the Eighty-First Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane on Saturday, 27 June 2026 at Churchie.

Justice & Advocacy • Thursday 2 July 2026 • By Sandra King OAM

NAIDOC Week: 50 years of community coming first



"This is a picture of me in *The Daily Telegraph* getting ready for NAIDOC Week in 1976"

There are two specific NAIDOC Week memories that mean the world to me.

My favourite NAIDOC Week memory is coordinating my first all-First Nations fashion parade in Brisbane's Queen Street Mall in 1988. The NAIDOC Week committee asked me to organise this fashion parade. I held an audition for models, with 32 models selected, from young ages to mature ages, in diverse sizes.

We rehearsed for weeks prior to the parade and on the day of the event, there were so many people, both black and non-Indigenous, waiting to watch. This event changed our community — I saw the delighted looks on the faces of our children, adults and Elders. Their faces shined with hope for a better future for us — it was a light-bulb moment for our community. People still talk about that parade and how it changed them, their parents and the whole community.

Fifty years ago, in 1976, a newspaper photographer came to my place to take photographs to celebrate and promote the first NAIDOC Week. It was special to be a part of that first NAIDOC Week and special that *The Daily Telegraph* wanted to recognise it as a special day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This year's NAIDOC Week theme is "[50 Years of deadly](#)". It is about celebrating 50 years of NAIDOC Week. In our parlance, "deadly" is a very positive word that — depending on the context — means "fantastic" or "awesome" or "excellent".

The [NAIDOC Week website](#) explains that:

“Fifty Years of Deadly marks a milestone. It’s a tribute to the people who built this movement. the Elders who stood firm, the organisers who made space, the artists who turned resistance into expression, and the communities who keep showing up, year after year...Fifty Years of Deadly is a marker, not just of time passed, but of the momentum still building. It’s proof of what our people build when culture leads and community comes first.”

NAIDOC Week is our week, when we invite everybody to celebrate our culture, our survival, our determination to succeed.

I especially love the Friday of NAIDOC Week when the [Musgrave Park Family Fun Day](#) is held. It is the largest NAIDOC Week event in Australia, and everybody can attend because entry is free and it is an alcohol- and drug-free event for families to celebrate and learn about who we are as a people.

I encourage all Anglican Church Southern Queensland people to get involved in this year’s NAIDOC Week, such as the [Musgrave Park Family Fun Day](#), which will be held on Friday, 10 July 2026 between 9am and 5pm. Other NAIDOC Week events will be posted on the official [NAIDOC Week website](#) — I also encourage all people holding NAIDOC Week events to [register their events](#) on this website.

I am organising the following Anglican Church Southern Queensland events:

- A NAIDOC Week conversation and afternoon tea with Butchulla / Gubbi Gubbi Elder Uncle Les Malezer on Tuesday, 7 July 2026 between 12.30pm and 2.30pm in the Darnell Room, Cathedral Precinct, 373 Ann St, Brisbane (please [register online](#) to secure your spot).
- An Untold Histories Workshop (and morning tea), which I am presenting, on Thursday, 9 July 2026 between 9.30am and 11.30am at St Francis Theological College, Baroona Rd, Milton (please [register online](#) to secure your spot).

I also encourage readers to find out more about how the ACSQ’s [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) supports NAIDOC Week (see page 27 especially).

Editor’s note: Check out the NAIDOC Week website for resources, including [educational resources](#), [posters](#) and [digital assets](#), such as logos and banners for email signatures.

Top 10 tips for hosting a First Nations pop-up market to support First Nations economic self-determination, celebrate cultural practices and build community connection



During National Reconciliation Week 2026 Jessica Simpson and Sarah Marris from Anglicare's Mission, Research & Advocacy team hosted a pop-up market to showcase First Nations businesses and their products, including earrings and shoes (Image by anglican focus)

Recently, during National Reconciliation Week we took the opportunity to celebrate and support First Nations economic self-determination through a pop-up market. This market showcased the creativity and cultural knowledge of local First Nations businesses. Aligning to this year's National Reconciliation Week theme, "[All In](#)", which encourages all Australians to commit wholeheartedly to reconciliation every single day, the markets were a meaningful way to walk our talk. Moving beyond simply hosting a workplace morning tea, this initiative enabled us to educate Anglicare team members, while connecting them to Community.

Ahead of National Reconciliation Week we worked with local First Nations businesses to organise a pop-up market offering a variety of items for sale, including earrings; paintings; bush medicine products, such as skincare products; homewares; designer heels featuring First Nations artwork; clothing and accessories; cultural artefacts; DIY weaving kits; and, hand-painted dolls.



During National Reconciliation Week 2026 Jessica Simpson and Sarah Marris from Anglicare's Mission, Research & Advocacy team hosted a pop-up market to showcase First Nations businesses and their products, including art, dolls and accessories (Image by *anglican focus*)

Proud Jinibara, Bigambul, Kuku Yalanji, Ewaniam and Cobble Cobble woman [Helen Rose's bush medicine products](#) generated a lot of questions and conversation. Helen's gumby gumby products included moisturisers, exfoliating soap bars and capsules. Many Anglicare employees asked what gumby gumby is and we explained that it is a plant with anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties. Gumby gumby has been used for thousands of years by First Nations peoples.

Other items that generated numerous conversations were artefacts made by G/Kamilaroi woman Rosie Lang and Cultural Educator Scott Hautaniemi from [Culturally Informed Practices](#). A number of team members asked questions about the traditional use of the stone axe, spear, coolamon and shields.

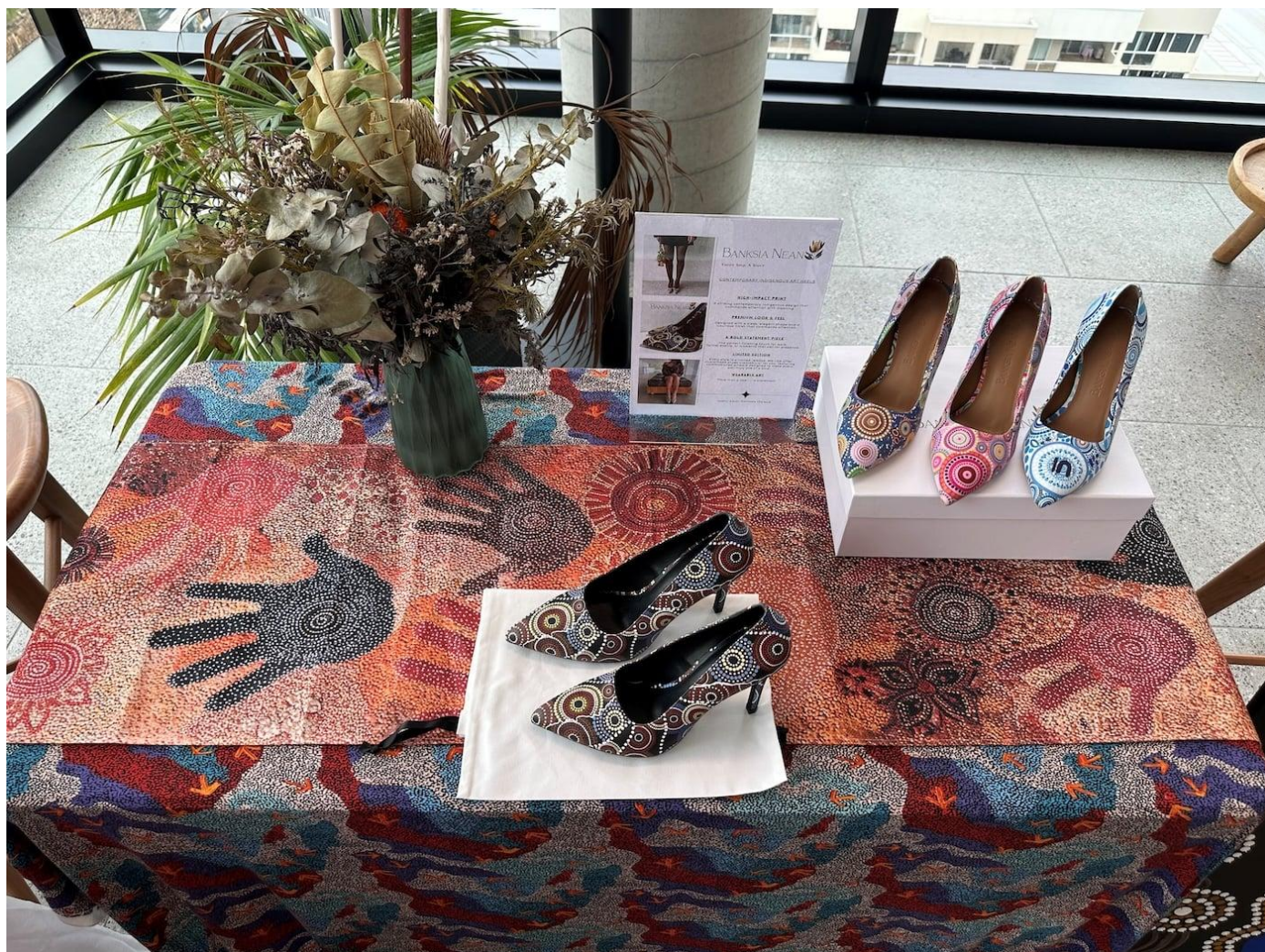


During National Reconciliation Week 2026 Jessica Simpson and Sarah Marris from Anglicare's Mission, Research & Advocacy team hosted a pop-up market to showcase First Nations businesses and their products, including gumby gumby items, skincare, and a shield and axe (Image by *anglican focus*)

Most of the artisans provided printed information so we could answer questions, as well as QR codes so team members could find out more or social media details so team members could “follow” their businesses.

We built relationships with the artisans ahead of the market. This is vital because it ensures our relationships are transformational rather than transactional — built on mutual trust and respect, rather than being “extractive”.

We sold over \$3,500 of products in the pop-up market, with all proceeds, of course, going to the First Nations artisans.



During National Reconciliation Week 2026 Jessica Simpson and Sarah Marris from Anglicare's Mission, Research & Advocacy team hosted a pop-up market to showcase First Nations businesses and their products, including shoes with dot painting designs (Image by *anglican focus*)

A market like this could be hosted by an Anglican Church Southern Queensland parish, school, ministry or agency during [National Reconciliation Week](#) or [NAIDOC Week](#) or for Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day.

We are hoping to produce a gift guide ahead of Christmas to give Anglicare Southern Queensland's employees ideas for gift buying — we will share this guide with *anglican focus* readers.

Ten 10 tips for hosting a First Nations market:

1. Start building relationship with First Nations communities and businesses.
2. Plan the market months in advance, especially if you are selling items on consignment, which requires a high degree of trust.
3. Ask the stall holders whether they wish to run their own stall or offer to sell the items on their behalf, discussing ways to collect funds.
4. If you are running the market stalls, do some research — online and by chatting with the artisans — so you can answer basic questions and are across any cultural protocols.
5. Request promotional material (e.g. a flyer with basic information and a QR code), so you have product information handy.
6. Ensure products are sold for a wide range of people, including for different genders and ages.

7. Ensure products are sold with different price points, so everyone can afford to support the First Nations businesses
8. Promote the market ahead of time, including through an eNewsletter, flyers, notices and bulletins, social media and through word of mouth
9. Ensure you have enough stands and racks to display the items on the tables, along with tablecloths and flyer holders.
10. Post on social media about your market once it is running to highlight and promote the First Nations businesses.

Editor's note: the Anglican Church Southern Queensland's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) "Actions" and "Deliverables" include:

- **Encourage engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Traditional Owners, and Elders to build strong relationships and develop new partnerships.**
- **Encourage each ACSQ commission to organise at least one NRW event each year and register all their NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.**
- **Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.**
- **Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods and services from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses to staff.**
- **Develop commercial relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.**

A gift of hope



St Francis of Assisi and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil in Damietta in 1219 (Image sourced from the Franciscan Voice website)

*The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.*

Hail Mary, full of grace...

If you are in the vicinity of the Cathedral at 6am, Noon or 6pm, you will hear a bell tolling three times — pause — three times — pause — three times — pause — none times. The sequence is also rung by the bell at our parish church, All Saints', Wickham Terrace, and various other churches and chapels across the Diocese.

Each cluster of rings has a section of the Angelus prayer associated with it. In essence the Angelus bells and prayer are a call to the faithful to pause briefly to reflect and pray, and a subtle way of proclaiming the importance of the incarnation of Jesus for the whole world. Passersby often ask us about the meaning of the ringing bells.

*And the Word was made Flesh:
And dwelt among us.*

Hail Mary...

Last week I was on retreat at the Anglican Franciscan Hermitage in Stroud, NSW, and while there was reminded of the origins of the Angelus Bells and Prayer.

Each day during the Midday Office of Prayer, the brothers read a short excerpt from a collection of early Franciscan documents. These include the writings of St Francis, his companions and the early recorders of Franciscan history. During my stay the readings focused on Francis' 1219 visit to The Sultan of Egypt, Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil in Damietta. Francis made the visit during the Fifth Christian Crusade, crossing the Christian-Muslim battle lines in order to do so, seeking to talk about the faith and bring about peace. He soon gained the Sultan's respect. The meeting in itself has much to teach us about the important role that personal involvement can play in interfaith dialogue and understanding.

*Behold the handmaid of the Lord:
Be it done unto me according to Thy word*

Hail Mary...

It is widely accepted that while he was traveling across the Middle East Francis was deeply touched by the Islamic call to prayer, *Adhan*, which occurs several times a day. On his return to Italy, Francis encouraged the local authorities and his hermitages to ring bells every evening as a sign to pause and praise God.

Shortly after St Francis' death, the Franciscan community adopted the practice of ringing the evening bell as a formal act of devotion. The text of the Angelus, in a form similar to the one used today, was developed by the Franciscan, Benedetto Sinigardi of Arezzo, and adopted for use by Franciscan houses from 1263 onwards.

The practice of also ringing bells at Noon was introduced by Pope Callistus III in 1456, with the specific intention of praying for peace.

Eight hundred years after Francis visited the Sultan in Egypt, in April 2017, Pope Francis visited Cairo, Egypt, to promote interfaith dialogue and to express solidarity with the Middle East's Christians. While speaking at the Centre for Sunni Islamic Learning, Francis and Grand Imam Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb declared that no violence can be justified in the name of God.

In these days of increasing division, I find this to be an encouraging story; one that comes to us from a time of deep division. A gift of hope.

*Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord,
that as we have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel,
so by his cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(Collect for The Annunciation and Concluding section of The Angelus)

First published in the *St John's Cathedral Precinct eNews* on 6 July 2026.

Quiet heroes caring for Queensland children recognised during Foster and Kinship Carer Week



(Photo supplied by Anglicare Southern Queensland)

This Foster and Kinship Carer Week (6–13 June), Anglicare Southern Queensland is thanking the carers across its organisation for the extraordinary contribution they make to our communities, as they continue to open their hearts and homes to children and young people in need.

Anglicare's Chief Operating Officer of Children, Youth and Families, Tammy Lloyd, said the week is an opportunity to take pause and recognise the everyday care and commitment shown by foster and kinship carers.

"Foster and Kinship carers play such a vital role in providing a sense of safety, stability and connection in the lives of children and young people," Ms Lloyd said.

"The work of our dedicated carers often happens quietly, in the everyday moments that may go unseen by others. From packing lunchboxes and helping with homework, to bedtime stories and being a child's comfort person on those tough days that feel too heavy to carry alone.

"Although this work may sometimes go unseen, their care and compassion do not go unnoticed. At Anglicare, we are deeply grateful for the difference they make in the lives of children and young people.

"Whether they are providing short-term care, long-term care, emergency care, respite care or kinship care, their contribution is profoundly meaningful and makes a genuinely life-changing impact."

Ms Lloyd said Foster and Kinship Carer Week is also an opportunity to acknowledge the additional pressures many carers and families are facing as increasing living costs continue to impact household budgets.

“We know the rising cost of essentials such as groceries, fuel, rent and mortgage is placing pressure on many households and foster and kinship carers are certainly not exempt from those challenges.

“We are deeply grateful for the commitment of our carers, particularly at a time when many families are having to make careful decisions about household spending and day-to-day costs.”

In 2025, Anglicare supported more than 1,800 foster and kinship carers to provide safe and loving environments for 2,339 children and young people across Southern Queensland.

The organisation partners carers with practitioners to assist them on their care journey.

Additionally, they connect them with the wider foster care community, and provide training programs, resources, and 24/7 support lines.

To find out more about Anglicare’s Foster and Kinship Care services, or to learn about becoming a carer, please visit [Foster and Kinship Care Services | Foster and Kinship Care Queensland | Anglicare SQ](#)

Restorative practices workshop 2026: reflections and learnings



"As a clergy person in ministry, I can see that restorative practice helps me to see the benefit of long-term relationship and trust building between individuals," says The Rev'd Allana Wales (Image supplied)

The Rev'd Sue Grimmett — Rector, The Parish of Indooroopilly

Introduction

Many people are aware of restorative justice in the legal system, but may not be aware of the broader application of restorative practices and its alignment with the foundational principles of building, restoring and renewing relationships found in the Gospel. Restorative processes enable people to work together about issues that most closely affect them. This year, a second round of training was hosted at St Francis College and attended by clergy and lay people from around our Diocese. The workshop, "Setting Relations Right: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation Through Group Conferencing", which was facilitated by Dr Alikki Vernon and Dr David Moore, provided three days of training on restorative practice and relationship management. The 2025 and 2026 training was made possible through grants from the Australian Research Theology Foundation Inc. (ARTFInc).

The Rev'd Allana Wales — Assistant Curate, The Parish of Ipswich

Being in the facilitator's chair for a role-play of a group conference gave me startling insight as to how countercultural restorative work is. The restoration of right relationships in the aftermath of harm can be a long and costly process. Because many of our legal and justice systems are based on punitive sentencing, restorative practice is quite a countercultural and counterintuitive way of bringing about change for the better. For instance, facilitating restorative group processes requires skills that are

sometimes counterintuitive to what we may have learned in pastoral care training. These skills in facilitating conversations are things that can be learned, and with the right group coaching sessions they can even be practised.

As a clergy person in ministry, I can see that restorative practice helps me to see the benefit of long-term relationship and trust building between individuals. Sometimes my instinct to affect change, or resolve conflict, or “fix” a situation between people is strong, but restorative practice involves investing the sort of time and resources in relationships that ultimately prevents adversity in the first place.

The group conferencing method has practical application in our Anglican Church parishes, ministries and schools — where it can be a rarity that all parties are in the same circle — to gather perspectives about issues of concern. The investment of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland in facilitating restorative practice skills to clergy and laity is an initiative of which we can be proud.



“When the Church has the courage to approach interpersonal, inter-group — and perhaps even institutional — challenges with a restorative lens there is a greater chance to address difficult issues, maintaining each individual’s dignity while bringing about change, healing and transformation,” says Tanja Hagedorn (Image supplied)

Tanja Hagedorn — Parishioner, St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly

Restorative practices use frameworks within which processes are applied to facilitate transformation and healing. The first round of sharing their perception of the issue by everyone involved provides both opportunity to speak *and* to listen. Reflecting on this, the participants often change their

perception, as a shift happens from “individual shame to shared shame”, as explained by David Moore and Alikki Vernon. This provides the platform for collaboration towards change. This insight was a real eye opener to me and helped me understand the effectiveness of restorative practices.

In my work of addressing biases, stereotyping and various forms of discrimination the challenge often is to create shared ownership for the harm experienced by a minority group. The concept of shared shame, which then motivates all to find a solution to a safer environment for all, is helpful in designing programs and processes in various contexts.

When the Church has the courage to approach interpersonal, inter-group — and perhaps even institutional — challenges with a restorative lens there is a greater chance to address difficult issues, maintaining each individual’s dignity while bringing about change, healing and transformation. This approach sets the Church up to be relevant and safe in our current conflicted world.



“The conference model for ‘an issue of shared concern’, which I learned about in this workshop, is so logical it is almost breathtaking,” says The Rev’d Chris Bedding (Image supplied)

The Rev’d Chris Bedding — Professional supervisor & Anglican priest

Restorative practices are part of the suite of reflective practices that the Church needs in order to function. We spend countless hours planning annual meetings. We have detailed standing orders for our Synod meetings. However, we also need to embed simple, effective ways of listening to one another and talking about our common life. Restorative practices are not just something we save until things go wrong. We also use restorative practices to make sure things go right.

I am often asked to help lead difficult conversations for churches and community organisations. The conference model for “an issue of shared concern”, which I learned about in this workshop, is so logical it is almost breathtaking. I will be taking this model into my next difficult conversation.

We need to embody good news if we want to proclaim it. A congregation that is stuck in entrenched conflict or paralysed by anxiety can’t do that. Whether we are exploring evangelism, budgets or the parish fete — restorative practices help Anglicans to talk about complicated matters safely.

Editor’s note: A second workshop reflection co-authored by ACSQ people will be published on *anglican focus* shortly.

Reflections • Sunday 28 June 2026

Principal in focus: Joe Wright, Fraser Coast Anglican College



Principal Joe Wright reading to Fraser Coast Anglican College students in 2026 (Image from Footprints magazine, used with permission)

I knew from the first day I walked into Fraser Coast Anglican College that there was something special about this community and that an Anglican education, one that nourishes the body, mind and spirit, aligned perfectly with my educational philosophy.

Although Fraser Coast Anglican College was still in its early days when I arrived, I discovered a community that valued the holistic development of its students and had embedded this philosophy in everything they did. I knew these values; this mission was worth devoting a career to. My journey from teacher to Principal took 17 years and I am grateful for the opportunities provided to me in a regional school and privileged to be able to lead this community into bringing its bold vision into reality.

Prior to FCAC's establishment in 1995, the Fraser Coast region had limited schooling options. It wasn't always easy to sell the concept of an Anglican education to the wider community. It was easy for some to label a school that valued excellence as "elitist". After many years of engagement with the local community through sport, the arts and service, FCAC earned its place of pride within the Fraser Coast community. Today, it flourishes.

Leading a regional school has its fair share of challenges and joys, and I've been fortunate to be there for most of the journey. As a leader, in various roles, I've experienced the tough times and learnt the valuable lessons that follow. What always sustained us during those times was the calibre of the staff. I have found the staff in Anglican schools are deeply connected to their school communities, they are engaged in the wider mission. They go above and beyond, walking many extra miles for their students. Our teachers are more likely to see their role as a vocation, rather than "just a job". You cannot easily measure the benefits of such a culture, but there is no doubt that the beneficiaries are our students, and they continue to benefit long after they graduate.

Anglican schools encourage their students to use the gift of their education to benefit their community, not just themselves. In an era where intelligence can be outsourced and, in a world experiencing great volatility, there has never been a stronger argument for an Anglican education, one that enriches the body, mind and spirit of its students and adds value to the community. Truly, an education worth having.

Editor's note: First Published in the Anglican Schools Commission's [Footprints](#) magazine, Term 2 2026 edition.

Q&A with film buff, educator, former band singer and Director of Lay Education, Jonathan Sargeant



ACSQ Director of Lay Education Jonthan Sargeant in his St Francis College office in June 2026 (Image supplied)

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I live in Ashgrove, just down the road from where I grew up in The Gap, with my wife Lisa. I am part of The Parish of Milton community, worshipping at The Chapel of the Holy Spirit at St Francis College, though just to be different, I attend at Wednesday lunchtimes when I can.

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

First I worked as a chaplain in a state high school for seven years on behalf of the local community, including the local Anglican church. Then I managed to get a job working for our Diocese as Religious Education Officer, training and supporting volunteers from many different denominations and faiths who minister in state schools each week. I did that for around 17 years before becoming Director of Lay Education in our Diocese, having great fun creating faith formation resources for everyone to use.



Jonathan Sargeant with St James', Toowoomba community members discussing "Bible360: Intro to the Bible" in 2023 (Image supplied)

What does your current role involve?

On any given day, I might be refining a script, developing a new idea for a short course, filming an interview, writing new lecture material, penning a film review for [anglican focus](#), editing video, meeting with the Bishops about a new venture, chatting with clergy about doing workshops and more. So many different things are juggled every day!

What do you most love about your role?

This is a dream job for me because it involves smooching together education, faith formation and creativity into one melange and making that the most practical, user-friendly thing it can be. I work with a wonderful human being, Fiona Hammond too, so this is definitely teamwork.



FormEdFaith's Jonathan Sargeant and Fiona Hammond with Bishop John Roundhill getting ready for filming at St Francis College's Studio One in 2023 (Image supplied)

What is a highlight of your current role as Director of Lay Education?

Hearing from people all over Australia, New Zealand (and beyond!) about how they use the resources we make is the best thing ever. Users include small groups in unexpected dioceses, people in the train on the way to work, mothers while nursing new babies, a bloke in a GPS-controlled harvester, parish councils at the start of each meeting, the list goes on!

What projects or activities are you currently working on in your roles?

The [innerVIVID](#) program has been blowing my mind for two years now, as we create video material for people in the wider community to explore their spirituality in low-key, non-jargon ways. It's a great resource for Church-going people to share with their friends and families.



Fiona Hammond and Jonathan Sargeant from FormEdFaith at St Francis College on 18 March 2025 with ASKaround cards from the innerVIVID conversation project (Image by *anglican focus*)

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

I grew up amongst Christians, but rejected Christianity quickly when my mother gave me that option to attend church or not. I returned years later, inspired by a dramatic presentation about Jesus in a high school hall. My family had been praying!

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

I'm inspired by Jesus to try to live in community, always including those whom others leave out, challenging stupid rules and embracing love as the overarching guideline for every interaction. That's not always easy, but I try — my loving and supportive wife Lisa, who shares these ideas, makes it easier!



Jonathan Sargeant enjoying the daily crossword with other team members based at St Francis College, including Tim Coates, Margaret Humphries, Fiona Hammond and The Rev'd Canon Dr Marian Free in June 2026 (Image by *anglican focus*)

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 Church is great at smoothing the rough edges off our faith and giving us some infrastructure to enable awesome things to happen. Sometimes I feel we need to aim higher in that regard!

What is your favourite scripture and why?

My favourite passage is the story of Jesus having a chat with the woman at the well, starting in [John 4](#). It's the longest conversation Jesus has with anyone in the Bible, an amazing to-and-fro of verbal jousting and boldness from both of them!



Archbishop Jeremey Greaves presented Jonathan Sargeant (pictured with Lisa Sargeant) a special award to commemorate Jonathan's 30th anniversary serving the Church on Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at St Francis College (Image by *anglican focus*)

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

My wife, Lisa: I often ask myself "WHAT WOULD LISA DO?" Also, I'd say [Henry Ossawa Tanner](#), the African American artist (1859-1937). He never stopped trying to create amazing art through the lens of his faith, even during his struggles with belief.

Why is it important for Christians to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples towards Reconciliation?

If there's any unity in faith, it's to ensure that all people have a seat at the table. Rainbow theology tells us First Nations people were already here, but were kicked off their Country! That must change!



Jonathan Sargeant (back, fourth from left) being his usual funny self while the St Francis College team and formation students line up for the 2025 Ordination Day procession outside St John's Cathedral (Image by *anglican focus*)

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

The kindest gesture I ever received was to become lost in a market in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia as a 16 year old. I looked around and realised I was the odd one out in this huge sea of local people. That's helped me to understand the need for inclusion ever since.

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

When I was in Year 12, a visiting Modern History teacher taught us to "Shop early, ride late". His grandfather told him this to avoid crowds at Disneyland, but it's served me well in multiple situations ever since.



Jonathan Sargeant leads by example on a youth group camp in Noosa in 1983 (Image supplied)

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

Record player with solar panel battery, my record collection, and a fully staffed Thai restaurant. Am I pushing the boundaries of "three" a bit?

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

"Discover yourself at innervivid.au!!"

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

Watch films (at least one per day!), read graphic novels, and listen to and create music. I also enjoy travelling with Lisa, especially in Asia.



Lisa and Jonathan Sargeant enjoying the Coconut Market in Chiang Mai, Thailand in 2024 (Image supplied)

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

Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum* (1988). I love this line from it, re quoting British philosopher of science Karl Popper: "The conspiracy theory of society...comes from abandoning God and then asking: 'Who is in 'his' place?'"

Where do you do your best thinking?

The shower. I think quickly!

What's your best childhood memory?

Seeing *Star Wars* for the first time at the George Cinema in 1977.

What is your karaoke go-to song?

So many! But I always start the night with David Bowie's "Ashes to Ashes". Such an amazing melody!!



Bishop Tiffany Sparks and Jonathan and Lisa Sargeant getting ready to lead Licensed Lay Minister training in Ballina in 2025 (Image supplied)

What is your earliest memory?

Being at the Zoo in Wellington, NZ when I was three.

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

Put on a record at top volume (today it would be Public Enemy's "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back") and pat my cavoodle, Holly.

What is the funniest thing that happened to you recently?

The loud non-stop conversation of the couple sitting behind me in the cinema while watching *Project Hail Mary*: "Barry, what's going on with the spaceman now?"

What is your secret skill?

Knowing Elvis Costello lyrics and making a "boomerang" out of four ice-cream sticks.



As a hobby, Jonathan Sargeant creates music at home in his five minutes of spare time each day (2025, image supplied)

What makes you nostalgic and why?

Rainy flooding days. I remember riding my foam surfboard down swollen Fish Creek with a broom handle to ward off obstacles, such as barbed wire and snakes.

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

My wedding day, so I'd remember the boutonnières I forgot in the fridge.



Jonathan Sargeant and Lisa Sargeant (née Barke) on their wedding day at St Andrew's, South Brisbane in 1990

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

My words.

What item should you throw out, but can't bear to part with?

My collection of t-shirts from Australian band, The Church, back to the 80s.



Jonathan Sargeant fronting the band, Modern Poets, at Festival Hall, Brisbane in 1986 (Image supplied)

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

"Why didn't they get a bigger boat?" (okay, I'm a Spielberg nerd, I know the answer).

Editor's note: Catch more of the current work of Jonathan Sargeant at www.innervivid.au or on TikTok at [@innervivid66](https://www.tiktok.com/@innervivid66) where people learn how to have fresh conversations about spirituality in real and authentic ways.

Brisbane Anglicare Northsider celebrates 101st milestone



Anglicare's St Martin's Residential Aged Care centenarian Eloise celebrates her 101st birthday in June 2026 (Image supplied by Anglicare Southern Queensland)

An Anglicare Southern Queensland aged care resident in Brisbane's north has marked her 101st birthday surrounded by fellow residents, staff and guests, with a special morning tea and concert celebration.

Centenarian Eloise said the key to living a long life is gardening, eating breakfast every day and making time for travel.

"I love to garden, I love pulling out the weeds and tending to the plants. I think that's what has kept me going," Eloise said.

"You can't forget to eat your breakfast — that's the most important meal of the day.

"When I was younger, I travelled with my husband overseas to many places — Russia, Austria, Switzerland to name a few."

Anglicare's St Martin's Facility Manager Priya Titus said it was a privilege for the home to celebrate such a significant milestone with Eloise.

"Eloise is such a bright light and much-loved resident here at St Martin's. It was an absolute joy to celebrate her 101st birthday with our special guests and fellow residents, who Eloise now calls friends," Ms Titus said.

"Born in Brisbane, our centenarian has lived a full and colourful life, including time in Sydney where she worked in a bustling post office, to travelling the world with her late husband Michael and enjoying her great love of dancing.

“She has a wonderful spirit and is always up for a chat! This celebration was a lovely way to honour not only her special birthday, but the life she has lived and the warmth she continues to bring to those around her.”



“I love to garden, I love pulling out the weeds and tending to the plants. I think that’s what has kept me going,” Anglicare’s St Martin’s Residential Aged Care centenarian Eloise said on her 101st birthday in June 2026 (Image supplied by Anglicare Southern Queensland)

Ms Titus said that Eloise holds a special place in the home’s history as the first resident supported through Anglicare’s interim care accommodation partnership between St Martin’s Residential Aged Care Home and The Prince Charles Hospital.

“The interim care accommodation partnership helps support older Queenslanders like Eloise to transition safely from hospital into a care environment while their next steps are arranged, helping to improve patient flow and free up hospital beds for those who need acute care,” she said.

“In addition to freeing up hospital beds, the model is helping create a smoother and faster transition into permanent residential aged care.

“We are so grateful this transition led to a new chapter for Eloise, with St Martin’s becoming her permanent home, and we continue to see terrific outcomes for those supported through interim care.

“We are proud to be helping Queenslanders move from hospital into a permanent aged care home, where they can access clinical care, social and emotional support, build friendships and celebrate meaningful milestones like this.”

Among the guests was The Prince Charles Hospital geriatrician Lucy Dakin, who said reaching a triple digit birthday was an extraordinary milestone and shared some words of wisdom to the younger guests in the room.

“The secret to the centenarian’s longevity is a little genetics, a little about how you look after yourself — walking everywhere, having a purpose, and being grateful for what you have all certainly help!” Dr Dakin said.

“We know that diet and exercise play a role, as well as social networks and keeping your mind active.

“As geriatricians we are focussed on all of these elements when caring for older patients, giving them the best chance of feeling happy and healthy well into their hundreds.”

Since the interim care accommodation partnership began in November 2025, [Anglicare Southern Queensland](#) has supported more than 65 seniors to transition from hospital into the warm and welcoming residential aged care environment at St Martin’s before moving onto permanent placements in the home and with other aged care providers.

Archbishop of Canterbury takes pilgrimage to the Holy Land



Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally with the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem, The Most Rev'd Hosam Naoum, in the West Bank in 2026 (Photo by A Krogmann)

Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally has taken a five-day pilgrimage to Palestine and Israel at the invitation of the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, The Most Rev'd Hosam Naoum.

The visit is a joint pilgrimage of prayer and solidarity — meeting and praying with Palestinian Christians in East Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank, and Israel.

The pilgrimage has included travels to Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Birzeit; meetings with church leaders, lay people, and congregations in churches across the region; and visits to holy sites in Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.

The Archbishop of Canterbury also met with several patriarchs and heads of churches, and heard about the challenges and opportunities currently facing them in their ministry.

"I bring with me the prayers and solidarity of the Church of England and Anglican Communion — and the assurance that Christians in Palestine and Israel are not forgotten," she said.

Naoum said: "As we travel together from Bethlehem to Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land, following the path of our Lord's earthly ministry, we are reminded of our shared calling to be instruments of his peace and reconciliation."

The Archbishop of Canterbury met with 26-year-old Layan Nasir, a Palestinian Anglican who has spent three periods in Israeli administrative detention and prison over the last five years.

Nasir, who is a member of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Birzeit in the West Bank, was released from Israel's Damon Prison in May.

The Archbishop of Canterbury offered prayers and listened to her experiences about her time in detention.

"I'm grateful to Layan's family for their hospitality in their home. I will pray for them, and for God's blessing and healing for Layan after the terrible ordeal of her incarceration," she said.

"I pray for the release of all people who have been unjustly imprisoned, here in Palestine and Israel and around the world."

Also in her pilgrimage, Archbishop Mullally delivered a sermon at St Peter's Church in Birzeit, addressing the challenges faced by Palestinian Christians and the broader community.

In her sermon, she told the congregation she would use her role as archbishop to seek "the peace you desire and the freedom you deserve."

Acknowledging that "faithfulness can be costly," Archbishop Mullally lamented that 2,000 years after the birth of Christ "you are now facing so many barriers to practising your faith and living freely."

She continued, "And your faithful, hopeful resistance is also visible as fathers and mothers navigate the web of checkpoints daily to provide an income for their family, or to get their children to school to provide for their future, or as you gather to break bread together week by week in this church."

During the final day of her pilgrimage — 24 June — the Archbishop of Canterbury addressed the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, and reflected on what the visits have meant.

"Over the past few days, I have had the privilege of making a pilgrimage through this land. Pilgrimage is, of course, a journey through places," she said.

"But it is also a journey of the heart and mind. It is an exercise in listening: listening to God, listening to one another, and allowing ourselves to be changed by what we hear and encounter."

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 25 June 2026.