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# The Gippsland Anglican

Published in Gippsland Diocese since 1904 August 2023

## New Heaven, New Earth Arts Festival to return to St Paul's Cathedral

St Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Sale is eagerly anticipating its upcoming arts festival, to be held at the Cathedral from 20 August to 1 September.

Cathedral Dean Keren Terpstra says, "Our last arts festival was in 2021, so it is time for us to celebrate our creative selves." The festival will include a visual arts exhibition, and there will be some workshops on offer too.

This year's theme, 'New Heaven, New Earth', invites artists and visitors to listen for the words "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1-7) and consider our legacy. The vision described is of the heavenly city Jerusalem descending "like a bride" from heaven, and of the renewal (or making anew) of creation. It offers the hope of a world in which

there will be no more death, no more tears, and a promise to the thirsty of water from the spring of life.

This vision, Keren says, "invites us to consider what we are leaving behind – what is the legacy of our life, and the lives of those around us? What do we look forward to? What is our vision for a renewed and flourishing creation?"

Continued on page 3



## Clifton Waters Village goes 'Platinum'

This year marks 70 years since the Clifton Waters Village Council was first convened, in the winter of 1953. This new body was to oversee a journey from vision to reality, as the idea of providing affordable housing for older members of the community in East Gippsland was planted and took root in the Parish of Bairnsdale. It was an idea with a long evolution, grounded in early Anglican history in the region.

The property at Wy Yung was once the home of The Rev'd Robert Martin, purchased exactly 130 years ago, in August 1893, when he was appointed to the cure of souls in what was then the Parochial District of Paynesville. Martin named the 21 acres 'Mizpah' – a Hebrew word meaning 'watchtower' (see Gen 31:49) with overtones of a covenant bond between two people with God 'watching over' as witness.

Dubbed the 'Apostle of East Gippsland', Martin died in 1924, 100 years ago next February, aged 91. Some 30 years later, in 1953, Martin's daughter Antionette Augusta (Annie) sold the land (for about half its true value) to the Parish of Bairnsdale for the purpose of establishing a village to enable continued independent living for the ageing.

In the intervening decades, another pioneering priest, The Rev'd Gerard Tucker, had been advocating for – and actively establishing – better housing options for the disadvantaged and elderly, including at Carrum Downs in the 1940s, under the canopy of the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Tucker visited Bairnsdale in early 1953 to speak at a men's breakfast of the success of the Carrum Downs project in terms of providing self-sufficiency for its residents.

The same passion for affordable housing was thus kindled in the Rector, Canon George Smith, who approached Annie Martin with a dream for 'Mizpah', which – thanks to her generosity and the parish's commitment – he drove forward

with great vigour and urgency, attracting financial support from churches, local community groups and businesses, and government.

Gerard Tucker was born in the Old Vicarage at Christ Church South Yarra in 1885, where his father, Canon Horace Tucker, was the second Vicar of the parish and one of the great Christian socialists of that era in Victoria.

Horace Tucker started Christ Church Grammar School in the late 19th century, and when a history of the school was published in 2010, historian Colin Holden posed a very pertinent question in his introduction: "Who should educate our children?" In my epilogue (as Vicar at the time) I observed that – for an Anglican parish primary school, and one of the last of its kind – 'the church' had featured prominently in answers to that question for well over a century: "Not 'the church' in some abstract sense, but the church catholic's life and teaching as embodied in the [local] household of faith and fellowship" (*Crossing Divides*, p. 165).

As we celebrate this significant anniversary at Clifton Waters Village (CWV), we might well ask a similar question: "Who should care for our elders?" Since CWV's inception, 'the Church' has always been integral to any answer given; again, not abstractly but – both in terms of the Village's origins and the ongoing worship and pastoral care provided – the church catholic (or universal) as expressed by the church gathered locally at St John's Bairnsdale.

The Diocese – one of CWV's first benefactors in 1953 – has since taken on responsibility for the Village's governance, financial oversight and contractual arrangements with residents – a role that resonates with the concept of 'mizpah'. Operating under the *Retirement Villages Act* (and the 84th version thereof since 1986), CWV functions

in an increasingly complex regulatory environment, a reality that has demanded more and more from our Registry team of late.

The decision of Bishop-in-Council to trial outsourcing the day-to-day management of CWV to Ashleigh House this year reflects the need for 'on the ground' expertise in this space – not only to ensure we are meeting our statutory obligations, but most importantly to ensure the best possible experience for our 88 residents – including 21 couples and some younger retirees in the 'over 55' bracket – who currently occupy 100% of available units.

With that in mind, it was a privilege to attend the recent AGM at CWV, to meet the new Village Manager, Michelle McLean, and to meet with the Residents Committee to hear of the joys – and some challenges – associated with life at CWV.

In thinking about 'aged care' as an ecclesial activity, we do well to differentiate between what is operational and what is missional. There is no question that caring for our elders is intrinsic to our proclamation of the gospel, especially from a social justice perspective when yoked with affordable housing. What that looked like in post-World War 2 Australia is quite different, however, to how it mostly looks today.

In the same way as over the course of the 20th century most Anglican schools – with some notable exceptions, such as Christ Church Grammar School – moved towards independence while maintaining a meaningful connection with the church through their boards and chaplaincies, so too most church-run aged care facilities have become more professionalised in recent decades: operated by specialist agencies such as Benetas, again retaining real links back to their founding churches.

*Continued on page 11*

## Yarning about the Referendum

■ Sally Woollett

More than 70 Gippsland Anglicans gathered online in early July to join the Yarning about the Referendum webinar, hosted by the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland as part of NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Guest speaker was The Rev'd Canon Associate Professor Uncle Glenn Loughrey, who is the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's educator and advocate for the Referendum for the Recognition of First Peoples in the Australian Constitution and an enshrined Voice to Parliament. A Wiradjuri man, Uncle Glenn is a passionate advocate for constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples, and during the webinar he gave his faith perspectives on this topic.

Glenn was joined by Bishop Richard, and by the diocesan Aboriginal Ministry team: The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy and The Rev'd Kathy Dalton.

The webinar began with a Welcome to Country by Kathy, who also gave an acknowledgment to everybody present and the lands from which they were joining. Bishop Richard shared a prayer written recently by Uncle Glenn on behalf of NATSIAC, an organisation that Uncle Glenn chairs.

Uncle Glenn began by reminding everyone that the source document for the Voice to Parliament is the Statement from the Heart. This was produced as an answer to the question by the Referendum Council about how Australia's First Peoples want to be recognised in the Constitution. Commencing in late 2016, dialogues were held over 12 months and with over 1200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders around Australia.

The Statement from the Heart, Uncle Glenn explained, picks up on the four key and connected aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: Voice, Treaty, Truth and Makarrata. It's a document Glenn described as one of "absurd compassion and generosity" given historical circumstances since European settlement. "If we accept that document, we will get the chance to begin the process to transform Australia," he said.

The Voice is just one part of the process – once we "open the door," Glenn continued, there needs to be an agreement, or treaty, about what living together in the same space will look like. Next comes truth, which is about more than sharing negative experiences (important as they are); it is also about developing empathy and finding common ground. Further into the future, as relationships are being built, Makarrata – coming together as a community to repair a rift – is possible.

The process is a long journey, and "At the end of the day, we're going to have to live with each other," said Uncle Glenn. "And we

must love our neighbours as we love ourselves; we must carry the burden two kilometres instead of one; we must go the extra mile. It behoves us as Aboriginal people and ... as Christian people to follow that ethic."

Asked for her perspective, Aunty Phyllis said that in her community of Lake Tyers this detailed information is not out there, and that "there's a lot of learning we must do" before making a decision in relation to the Referendum.

"One of the troubles for our people is access to information," Glenn said. This year he is visiting groups across Victoria to speak and listen to them about the Voice and the Referendum. He said, "It behoves those promoting the Voice to get out and talk to our mobs." After the session, Aunty Phyllis felt more ready to share some information with her community.

When she first heard of the Voice to Parliament, Kathy described wondering about

what the Voice would mean. A Common Grace session at St Mary's Morwell took her thoughts back to the time of her great-great grandparents and about how they "cared for and nurtured this country" – and then to how everything changed with white settlement. Laws were made that didn't include her ancestors, and so Kathy questioned what that has meant for her family generations since then, and what it might mean for generations to come – can they really exist and belong while these laws continue?

During question time, discussions were constructive and plentiful. The session concluded with Bishop Richard's reading of Bishop Arthur Malcolm's prayer, and a blessing from Aunty Phyllis.

The webinar and other resources in relation to the Voice to Parliament and the Referendum are available at [gippslandanglicans.org.au/resources/referendum-2023](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au/resources/referendum-2023).



### New Heaven, New Earth Arts Festival to return to St Paul's Cathedral

Talented textile artists Rev'd Kate Campbell (left) and Jenny Batten will run a slowstitching workshop at the arts festival

*Continued from page 1*

The Cathedral invites visual artists to submit works that resonate with this theme in whatever medium they choose. Textiles, sculpture, as well as visual artworks, are most welcome. The works for the exhibition will be curated on Friday 18 August.

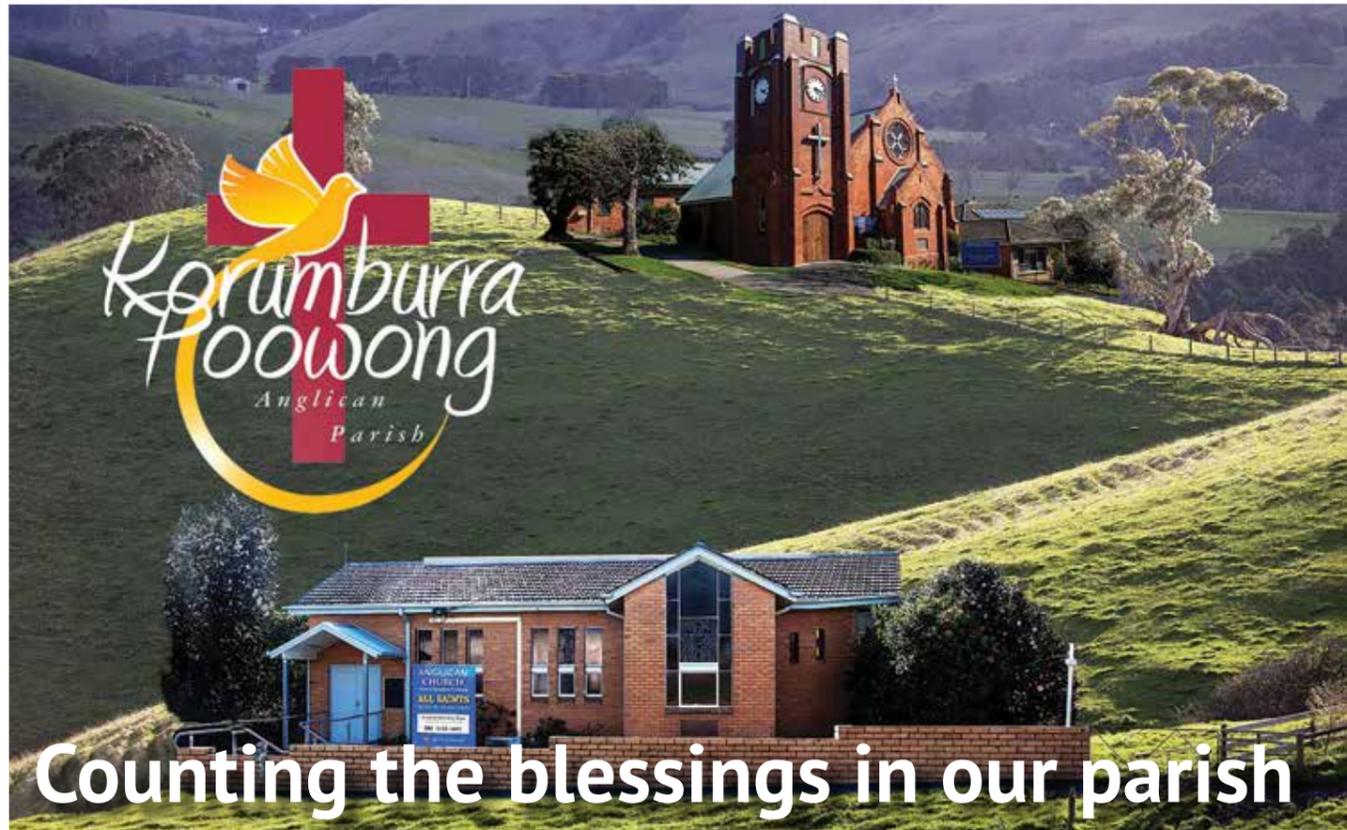
A contemplative photography workshop will be led by Peter Batten on 13 August

at 2 pm, Claire Flack will run a woodwork workshop (20 August, 2 pm), and a slowstitching workshop will be led by Jenny Batten and The Rev'd Kate Campbell (27 August, 2pm).

For further information, contact Jenny Batten (0438213382, batjen54@gmail.com).



**We are Gippsland Anglicans – Committed in Christ, Connecting in Service, Creative in Spirit. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all, especially children and vulnerable people. We acknowledge the First Nations people of this region as the traditional custodians of the land on which the Diocese of Gippsland serves, and pay our respects to past, present and emerging Elders of the GunaiKurnai, Boonwurrung, Bidawal and Ngarigo/Monero peoples.**



## Counting the blessings in our parish

■ Sue Wilson

What can I tell you about our parish that you don't already experience in your parish family? That each of us is welcomed among friends, that each of us fulfils a role and a God-given purpose, and that we find value in service. I know you are nodding your head and saying, "Yes, that's what it's like in our church too." How very blessed we all are.

First, there is our monthly community dinner – at last count 67 attended, the highest since COVID. The kitchen staff (I'm assured) are a well oiled machine – cold-pressed? I hope not! I'm not a cook, you see, and I am amazed at the quality and variety of the meals. And, while we eat, musicians entertain us in the warm hall.

The musicians have us stepping to the beat when they play in church, usually at the Family Service, where we enjoy the informality and opportunity to voice our thoughts. The Rev'd Fran Grimes has not long returned from Sharing of Ministries Abroad in Northern Ireland. As she reveals a little more of the experience, we enjoy the connection with other Christians across the world.

While Fran was away, others stepped up to assist at Mainly Music and it is always a pleasure to hear their feedback and see their smiles. Many of those ladies belong to the Women's Fellowship and then we all see each other again while working in the op shop.

Not to forget those who take on a variety of 'fix it' projects, learning as they go. Do you need possums removed, plumbing seen to, alarm services resurrected, wiring reconnected or signs erected?

Well, I'm sure, like us, you have an abundance of talent in your parish too.

The next Korumburra-Poowong community dinner will held on Friday 1 September at 5.30 pm.

### Men's brunch goes monthly at St Mary's Morwell

■ Ross Jacka

From time to time, St Mary's Morwell has been having a men's brunch. Men of different ages and life situations have been enjoying the food, conversation and jamming on various musical instruments, which has inspired the change to a monthly event. In future we will meet for brunch on the second Saturday of most months.

An 11 am start was chosen so that our gatherings would be more inclusive. We are aware that some of our number don't get up very early, maybe because they are tired after a busy week, or maybe because they are retired and no longer have to get up early. Gathering around the barbecue while the food cooks is something most men are very comfortable doing, so including this typical Aussie tradition enables men with either no connection



Tending the barbie at St Mary's brunch

or only a very marginal connection to the St Mary's congregation to enjoy each other's company.

The brunch is self-sustaining – the \$10 cost goes into a kitty for the next men's brunch – but we don't let lack of money stop someone from coming.

The Morwell men's brunch is a time and place for making and building relationships. Sustaining relationships reflects God's grace in the world.

## Performing arts showcase at St Paul's



Year 8 student Meg performing with the dance ensemble with a dance piece choreographed by Year 12 student Chloe Davidson

■ Paula Walland

The annual Centrepiece Concert performed by St Paul's Anglican Grammar School students once again left the audience in awe of their phenomenal performing arts talent.

From dancers to soul band and from choir to singer-soloists from both the Traralgon and Warragul campuses, there was something for everyone at the West Gippsland Arts Centre.

Backstage crew students broadened their technical experience for big-stage performances at a world-class theatre, enjoying being mentored by professional sound and lighting engineers at the Arts Centre.

Educators at St Paul's provide students with real-life experience through the entire Centrepiece process, first with an audition process for soloists, which

prepares them for future performing arts applications, and then with a performance open to the community at the Arts Centre.

Through a variety of co-curricular activities offered by the school, students at St Paul's can explore their potential in the performing arts, personalise their educational experience and make friends with peers from other year levels.

## 60 years of Mothers' Union for Beryl Goodridge

■ Jenny MacRobb

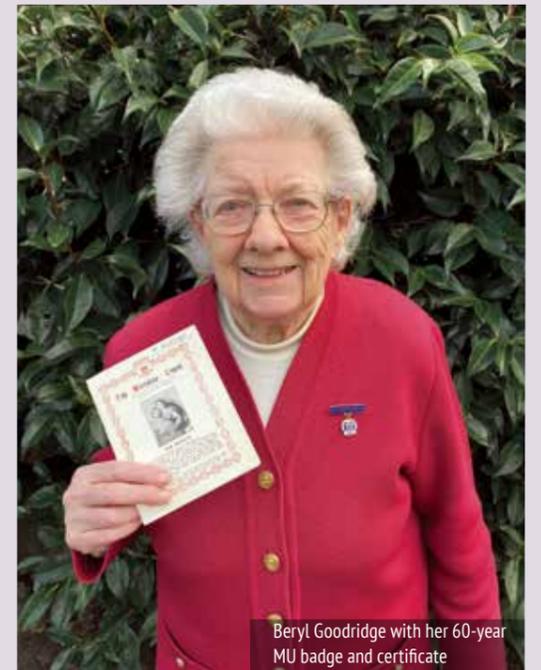
Members of Warragul Mothers' Union met at Fairview Village to witness our Diocesan President, Maryann Ashton, present Beryl Goodridge with her badge to recognise 60 years of membership. Beryl has actually been a member for 63 years, but due to the COVID lockdowns we were unable to visit her to mark this achievement.

As we have several members now resident at Fairview we meet there several times a year in order to share a prayer and worship time with them. This also means that they can be part of the decisions we make about the help we can give to those in need in our community.

As well as providing funds towards the Mothers' Union annual holiday at

The Abbey for families in need of some time out, we support our local food relief and community house. We do this by providing knitted beanies, scarves and gloves, rugs, sleeping bags, doonas, toiletries and any other items they need in order to support those sleeping rough or in hardship.

Despite the advancing age of our members, we can assist in these ways to fulfil one of the aims of Mothers' Union: "To help those whose family life has met with adversity."



Beryl Goodridge with her 60-year MU badge and certificate

# NAIDOC Week in Latrobe

■ Jane Anderson

I am pleased to share with you some of the terrific experiences and celebrations that took place during NAIDOC Week in the Latrobe Valley. As Latrobe Health Advocate, I, along with my team, had the honour of participating in various events that embraced the rich culture and heritage of our First Nations people. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the inspiring activities that unfolded throughout the week.

During the NAIDOC celebrations organised by Gippsland Water, it was a privilege to witness Tre Moffatt, a representative of GLaWAC, perform the smoking ceremony and share his wisdom with us. His words resonated deeply, reminding me of the profound connection our First Nations people have with the land. It was an important reminder to acknowledge and honour the traditional custodians of our home. I believe in fostering cultural understanding and respect within our community. Events like these provide an opportunity to recognise the significant contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and learn from their ancient wisdom. By embracing their heritage, we can work towards building a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

One of the highlights of NAIDOC Week was the vibrant community day held in Morwell. The atmosphere was fun, filled with unity, cultural exchange and a strong sense of belonging. People from all walks

of life came together to celebrate and learn from one another. The joy on the faces of the children was priceless as they ate popcorn and made their very own damper. They also had the chance to explore the world of Aboriginal art through face painting, showcasing the colours and patterns of the Aboriginal flag.

Leaving the event, I felt inspired and grateful for our incredible community. Honouring and supporting Indigenous culture is not limited to NAIDOC Week; it is something we should embrace every day. Together, we can create a society that values diversity and promotes inclusivity.

I appreciate the work and efforts of the organisations and individuals who made these events possible. The Gathering Place, Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Anglicare Victoria, Latrobe Regional Health, and Gippsland Latrobe Aboriginal Advocacy and Support all played a role in organising and supporting the NAIDOC celebrations.

I would also like to acknowledge the leadership demonstrated by Gail Mounsey and her team at Latrobe Regional Health. The NAIDOC celebration held there was a poignant tribute to our Elders, exemplifying the theme of the week. The presence of Aunty Sylvia Parsons, the hospital's first Aboriginal Liaison Officer, was deeply moving and a testament to her contributions to our community. The overwhelming participation of the staff group, filling

the entrance foyer, spoke volumes about Latrobe Regional Health's commitment to working alongside the Aboriginal community, and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all.

As the Latrobe Health Advocate, I am committed to continuing our support and appreciation of Indigenous culture, not just during NAIDOC Week but every day. I believe that by fostering cultural understanding, respect, and unity, we can build a healthier and stronger community.

As part of my role, I prioritise the experiences of Latrobe communities and advocate for changes in systems that can improve their health and overall wellbeing. My focus is on reaching out to those who are often not heard and giving them a voice through a platform that can bring their aspirations and concerns to the attention of the government and services. I strongly encourage governments and services to prioritise community input in the design and delivery of programs.

If you, or a group you belong to, would like to share your experiences with me, please get in touch with my team on 1800 319 255 and they will organise a time for us to catch up.

You can also keep up to date with my work through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. I look forward to hearing from you in the coming months.



## Implementing the Victorian Child Safety Standards

This year, TGA is highlighting the 11 Child Safe Standards to help us think, talk about and improve the way we do things in our ministries.

This month we take a look at Standard 6: *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*

### What is this standard about?

Standard 6 is about:

- a new obligation for parishes
- recordkeeping
- recruitment
- training.

### Parish documents

- Employment advertising includes a parish's commitment to child safety and wellbeing.
- Position descriptions set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities. (See the diocesan website for generic role descriptions.)
- Induction documents include information about the parish's Child Safe practices and complaint-handling process as well as reporting, recordkeeping and information sharing.

Adapted from *A Parish Guide to Implementation of the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards.*

## Have your say in TGA!

Send your letters\* of up to 350 words to [editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au](mailto:editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au).

- \* Please include your name and suburb for publication. Letters may be edited in the interests of clarity or space.



# Anglicare Victoria report flags tough times for renters

The number of rental properties available in Victoria has decreased by two-thirds in two years, and demand for housing has driven up median rents in some Melbourne suburbs by \$112 per week, Anglicare Victoria's 2023 Rental Affordability Snapshot has revealed.

Just 11,687 private rental listings were available for analysis when the data was captured on Saturday 18 March, with the number of affordable rentals in metropolitan Melbourne dropping 44% in the past year. While affordability in regional Victoria improved slightly, only 17 of 48 local government areas had any rental listings available at all.

Currently there are just 100 properties across the entire state that are affordable for Victorians on income support, but for individuals on Youth Allowance or JobSeeker payments, not a single property available was affordable without putting them into rental stress.

Sue Sealey, Acting CEO of Anglicare Victoria, said the housing crisis was harming young people disproportionately, especially those leaving state care, and a specific allocation of housing stock for this cohort is needed desperately.

"Our young people need better support to find safe and affordable housing. A quarter of Victorians currently without a home are

between the ages of 12 and 24, and only three per cent of social housing properties are leased to people in this age group. This urgently needs to change," Sue said.

"At Anglicare Victoria we've been receiving more frequent calls from single parents with young children who simply cannot find a home and have nowhere left to turn. The private rental market is failing these families, and the wait list for social and affordable housing is blowing out far beyond a year."

Courtesy Anglicare Victoria. The 2023 Victorian Rental Affordability Snapshot is available from [anglicarevic.org.au](http://anglicarevic.org.au). The national report is available from [anglicare.org.au](http://anglicare.org.au).

## Key report recommendations

- **Australia needs a higher proportion of social and community housing for young people under 25.**

A quarter of homeless people are between 12 and 24 years old, yet only 2.9% of social housing is leased to people under 24. A dedicated youth homelessness and housing strategy is needed that focuses on the unique needs and risks faced by young people who are homeless.

- **Victorians need more social and affordable housing.**

There is a critical lack of social and affordable homes in Victoria. Greater collaboration between state and federal governments is required.

- **Raise income support payments so people don't have to live below the poverty line.**

The low rates of Commonwealth support payments mean people are trapped in poverty and housing stress. A substantial increase to Commonwealth income support payments is needed to keep pace with the rapid rise in the cost of living.

- **Support housing supply to ensure it can keep up with population growth.**

Post-COVID population growth has put added pressure on the rental market in Victoria, affecting those at the lower end of the market the most.

- **Increase Rent Assistance payments.**

Urgent reform is needed to increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance so that it reflects current median rental prices. Then those in housing stress could spend more money on essentials such as healthy food, education and transport.

- **We urgently need a plan to end homelessness.**

We need a plan to end homelessness that tackles the causes of homelessness, including the lack of affordable housing, poverty and family violence, and more funding and support to rehouse people who are homeless.

- **Fix the tax system to better support low-income Australians.**

The federal government should scrap the Stage 3 Tax Cuts, which will cost the Federal Budget \$146 billion in the financial year 2024-25. About half that – \$76 billion – would raise income support to an acceptable level of \$88 per day. Doing so would lift almost 2.3 million Australians, including 840,000 children, out of poverty.

Elizabeth Donoghue

**Concession benefits for non-mains energy**

Did you know that concession card holders using non-mains energy for their heating, cooking and hot water can apply for a concession to help cover their yearly energy costs?

This includes sources such as LPG, firewood and generator fuel. You can apply directly through the Victorian Government, or Anglicare Victoria can assist you to apply.

*Department of Families, Fairness and Housing:*  
*Concessions and benefits:* 1800 658 521, [services.dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:services.dffh.vic.gov.au) (search 'energy concession')

*Anglicare Victoria Energy Assistance Program:* 1800 531 741, [anglicarevic.org.au](http://anglicarevic.org.au) (search 'energy assistance')

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Michael Starkie

## Music and male spiritual role models

■ Dr Cath Connelly

There's a touch of the Irish to be found on a Thursday evening down at The Abbey. Once a month the sounds of musicians on fiddles, whistles, guitars and accordions seep through the walls of Illawarra to fill the surrounding landscape with the richness of the Celtic tradition. Then we pause, while someone sings a song or recites a poem, or the

harp plays a Celtic air. If it were possible to capture the experience in a snapshot, there would be smiling faces, companionship, lovely music. It is a very special experience that is open to both musicians and those who just want to sit back and listen. This is your place; come find a home here.

The Abbey program continues to

expand. October sees the introduction of a Men's Spirituality mentoring course and retreat. There has never been a more critical time in human history when male spiritual role models are needed. This course and retreat will assist men to grow spiritually within themselves and will also equip them with skills to help others do the same.

### Save the date



#### AUGUST

- 10: Celtic music session
- 11–13: Circle dancing retreat
- 18–19: Diocesan retreat
- 22: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. Wild Goose: Soulscape of Yearning
- 26: Abbey Feast, cohosted by Mirboo North parish
- 27: Maria Forde concert

#### SEPTEMBER

- 13: The Creation Windows through Literature, Art and Music: *Light from Darkness, Sun Moon & Stars, the Firmament* with Sue Fordham and June Treadwell
- 14: Celtic music session
- 19: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. Sacred Photography with Jenny and Peter Batten

#### NOVEMBER

- 3–5: Men's Spirituality mentoring course and retreat
- 8: The Creation Windows through Literature, Art and Music: *The Sea* with Sue Fordham and June Treadwell
- 12: Celtic music session

## St Paul's Cathedral seeks donations for solar

St Paul's Cathedral is currently seeking donations for the rooftop solar system that was installed in January. The Sustainability Victoria grant covered about half the cost and we have received some generous donations, but still have a shortfall. Can you help?

Tax-deductible donations can now be made to Anglican Earthcare Gippsland. In the bank transfer reference, please identify as 'Cathedral Solar'.

AEG bank details are Anglican Earthcare Gippsland Inc. Public Gift Fund, BSB 013 795, account number 206078399.

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## Cross of St Augustine to Anglican Board of Mission's Executive Director

The Rev'd Andrew Sempell, Chair of the Anglican Board of Mission and Anglicans in Development Boards, has advised that Lambeth Palace is pleased to announce the awarding of the Cross of St Augustine to the Rev'd Dr John Deane, CEO of the Anglican Board of Mission and Anglicans in Development, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby.

The Cross of St Augustine, named after the Benedictine monk who led the evangelisation of England, is an award of merit given at the discretion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, his successor. It is awarded to members of the Anglican Communion who have made significant contributions either to the life of the global Communion, or to a particular autonomous church within it. The Cross can also be awarded to Christians of other traditions who have made a conspicuous contribution to ecumenism. Created in 1965 by Archbishop Michael Ramsey, it is the second highest international award for service within Anglicanism.

The Most Rev'd Geoffrey Smith, Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop of Adelaide and former National Director of ABM, said, "I join with many others in congratulating John on the award of the Cross of St Augustine. In his more than 25 years working with ABM John has demonstrated a consistent



Fr John (left) with the Archbishop of Canterbury

commitment to the mission of God."

The Rev'd Canon Victor Joseph, Principal of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College and ABM Board Member, said, "John's gifts in decision making, leadership, empathy and desire to expand the kingdom of God through the Anglican Board of Mission Australia is a living testimony for the Church. Now the recipient of the Cross of St Augustine,

I extend my deepest appreciation to John for his work. His ability to communicate and willingness to work with the Australian Indigenous people of the Church is also to be noted in helping break down the barriers. Thank you, John, and may this award of the cross be an example for others to continue to walk with you on this journey."

## The Rev'd Dr John Deane – the Cross of St Augustine for Services to the Anglican Communion

**For his outstanding leadership in the Communion in the area of holistic mission, including leading the Anglican Board of Mission, Church of Australia, for over 20 years and playing a leading catalytic role in the formation of the Anglican Alliance.**

The Rev'd Dr John Deane has played an outstanding role in building the capacity and effectiveness of the Anglican Communion in holistic mission, including in humanitarian relief and sustainable development. As a leading thinker, John has shaped the vision of the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) into a significant agency serving the global Church with partnerships throughout the Anglican Communion, and especially in Asia and the Pacific. The longstanding relationships of trust which John has established across many provinces have proved valuable, especially in fragile contexts such as

Myanmar. He has led in shaping the vision and quality of ABM's work which has provided a foundation for collaborative programming, joint advocacy, and technical excellence in a range of development sectors. In particular, ABM's work on gender justice, disaster relief and asset-based community development (ABCD) has brought recognition from the Australian government and other secular agencies, not just for ABM, but for the provinces with which they partner. John has also been a driving force in the establishment of the Anglican Alliance, having envisaged the need for such a platform to connect and

equip the Anglican family of churches and agencies. He worked intensively with others to build relationships and commitment on which to establish the Anglican Alliance and has continued to steer its development as a Trustee for six years and now as Chair of the Circle of Elders. John is guided by his faith and belief in the potential of the Church as a vehicle for God's mission in the world. In late 2022 he also completed the 500-mile pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

Anglican Board of Mission

Thomas Schoch



# Feeding 10 billion when climate change threatens food security

A rice paddy in the Mekong River Delta

On World Population Day (11 July) Sustainable Population Australia (SPA) called for an end to global population growth to avert widespread suffering from hunger.

Current world population stands at 8.046 billion and is expected to rise to 9.7 billion by 2050 (UN median projections), peak at 10.4 billion in 2086, and then slowly decline to 10.3 billion by the end of the century.

SPA national president Jenny Goldie says these population projections take no account of current realities.

"The overwhelming reality is climate change," says Ms Goldie. "We cannot maintain agricultural output if temperatures continue to rise.

"The sooner we end population growth, the better for climate and food security.

"Food production will increasingly be affected by heat, drought, wildfires, and flooding, all of which are functions of climate change. A new study published in *Nature Communications* warns that climate change could cause simultaneous harvest failures across major crop-producing regions, threatening global food security."

Another study, published recently in the *Nature Sustainability* journal, found more than 90% of the world's marine food supplies are at risk from environmental changes such as rising temperatures and pollution, yet not enough is being done to adapt to these growing environmental risks.

"If sea levels continue to rise, the major food-producing deltas of the world will

be inundated," Ms Goldie says. "Already, thousands of people are forced to leave the Mekong Delta because of sea-water incursions, a direct result of climate change and sea-level rise.

"Other food-producing deltas will be similarly affected, including the Nile in Egypt, the Pearl River delta in China, and the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in India and Bangladesh.

"Add to that the imminent decline in phosphorus, which has made farming vastly more prosperous, feeding the enormous increase in human population. The diminishing access to phosphorus poses a threat to the food system worldwide."

Ms Goldie says it is widely accepted as to what must be done to stabilise population.

"We have to have universal access to contraception, improve the rights of women, educate women and girls, and change cultural attitudes that prevent women in some countries from gaining access to reproductive health services.

"We are at a critical moment in history when things have to change," says Ms Goldie. "We cannot continue on the path we are on. We have to shift our efforts to ensuring everyone has adequate food, shelter and energy.

"This is, however, dependent on stabilising population everywhere, most importantly in industrialised countries where consumption is high. Resources have to shift to poorer countries to ensure nobody lives in poverty. At the same time,

those countries must ensure their populations stabilise."

Sustainable Population Australia



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Briony Hardinge Photography, supplied by AgriFutures Australia

# Young people's perspectives on the future of rural industries

Horizon Scholars at the 2022 AgriFutures Stakeholder Summit in Albury, NSW

With extensive global challenges facing agricultural and rural industries today, including climate change, economic uncertainty, technological disruption and evolving consumer preferences, industry leaders must engage the next generation of agricultural frontrunners.

AgriFutures Australia's latest report, 'Listen up: Young people's perspective on the future of Australian agriculture and rural industries', is a compilation of thought-provoking perspectives and provocations from the future leaders of the agriculture sector. The report highlights the crucial role that young people play in shaping the future of Australian agriculture. Also, it emphasises the need for industry and government to invest in, listen to and collaborate with this vital demographic.

The report was compiled as a comprehensive summary of the conversations and collaborative efforts that emerged from the 2022 AgriFutures Horizon Scholarship

Workshop in Albury, as part of the AgriFutures Stakeholder Summit.

Over 40 Horizon Scholars attended the workshop and created a set of priorities outlined in the report to help industry navigate these challenges and create a sustainable and prosperous future for the industry.

Horizon Scholar Jenna Wright contributed to the report and said the Horizon Scholars are committed to Australia's food and fibre future.

"We all care about strengthening the industry, driving change, and including more unique voices. We care about ensuring the success of all industry areas, because we all have a passion for Australian agriculture as a whole," said Jenna.

According to Abbey O'Callaghan, Manager, Workforce Delivery at AgriFutures Australia, young people have the power to shape the future of rural industries.

"By harnessing the Horizon Scholars' innovative thinking and fresh perspectives,

we can transform the narrative surrounding agriculture and secure a thriving and sustainable future for generations to come.

"In order to achieve this vision, the report calls on industry and decision makers to embrace innovation and diversity, understand that profit and purpose go hand in hand, and find inspiration outside of agriculture, and Australia," said Abbey.

Additionally, AgriFutures Australia recognises the importance of consulting with Horizon Scholars, the key group who contributed to building the report, when designing programs that impact young people and the future workforce of agriculture. Their unique experiences, aspirations, and knowledge position them as invaluable contributors to policy development and program design.

Courtesy AgriFutures Australia. The latest AgriFutures Australia report is available at [agrifutures.com.au](http://agrifutures.com.au).



Continued from page 2

CWV remains a notable exception to this pattern, and Gippsland Anglicans can be quietly proud of the ministry exercised to residents, their families and the wider community over the past three score years and ten.

Later in the year, Linda Davies' photographic history of CWV will be launched as part of the Village's 'platinum' celebrations. It is a fine volume, and I commend it to you in anticipation.

In the meantime, we give thanks to God for the faithful service of Robert

Martin and his family, of Canon GFD Smith, of the Tuckers, and of St John's Bairnsdale these 70 years, and we pray that God will continue to 'watch over' all who live, work and volunteer at CWV, and our collective stewardship of this much-loved household of faith and fellowship.

Grace and peace,

# Sensing, striving and spirited discussion

## CLERGY CONFERENCE 2023

### ■ Rev'd John Webster

It was lovely driving across Gippsland, along avenues of gum trees, to the still waters of Raymond Island. It was my first visit to The Abbey for the annual Clergy Conference, which this year began on 19 June. We were kept well fed by Dave and Deb Chambers and we shared in the daily offices of morning and evening prayer, and compline.

Dr Rachelle Gilmour led us in a Bible study each morning on the Psalms, focusing on worship, lament and mission. Dr Gilmour is Bromby Associate Professor of Old Testament at Trinity College Theological School, and we also enjoyed the company of her husband and two-year-old daughter, who joined us at mealtimes.

Western culture limits the concept of human senses to just sight, sound, taste, touch and smell, but Dr Gilmour explained that the Judaic culture includes speaking and walking as 'senses' that have a similar impact on our conscious awareness. This adds to our understanding of how the liturgical actions of saying or singing the psalms while standing or processing are significant in Judeo-Christian worship.

The Psalms are a wonderful mix of poetry with personal and communal responses, which continue to give us words for our own faith expression today. Dr Gilmour recommended seeing the theology expressed in them as more helpfully explored in terms of the various original collections of psalms, rather than just individually.

At one of our morning prayer services we were encouraged to reflect on Psalm 42 in pairs – while walking past grey kangaroos and black swans – and then contribute to a 'Raymond Island 2023' interpretation of the psalm.

Retired Bishop Stephen Pickard and Dr Raimundo are colleagues from the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture at Charles Sturt University, Canberra, and we enjoyed their banter when they interrupted and explained each other's points.

Bishop Stephen picked up on the importance of intentionally developing our personal and spiritual maturity. He explored the need for clergy to keep revisiting their ordination vows, to assess how they were keeping the promises made (see *The Ordinal in APBA*, p. 779ff). Promises need to be spoken aloud regularly – like psalms! – in order to help us keep them: as a bishop instructs during ordination, "... so that your public profession may strengthen your resolve."



John contemplates a furry friend as evening prayer is led by puppets and the 'cash cow' who interviewed 'St Paul'

One highlighted aspect was that some of the ordination promises are dependent on the participation of others. At ordination a priest promises to "strive together with [those they're serving and leading] to build up the body of Christ in truth and love, in unity and peace." Yet if parishioners do not participate in this, how is that priest to fulfil their promise? Here we were reminded that clergy and laity are

expected to strive together, for clergy to be able to serve and lead truly, and for the people to share in that.



### Supporting the Aboriginal Ministry Fund

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- development of Aboriginal ministry

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Dr Carlos Raimundo (right) and Rev'd David Perryman explore the Play of Life

Bishop Stephen retold the parable of the sower, in which we are sowers of promises: some promises fall onto the path, some onto rocky ground, some among thorns, and some onto good soil. How do we reconcile ourselves with fruitless promises? Such questions led to rich discussion.

Dr Raimundo is a medical doctor from Argentina with training in psychiatry, psychology, philosophy and theology, and a researcher in neuroscience on insight and behaviour modification. He was able to provide a fascinating insight into how the brain functions to produce either a sense of *shalom*/consolation or a sense of disease/desolation.

Dr Raimundo introduced us to The Play of Life®, a 'small figures' behavioural change methodology he has developed. The methodology helps people identify the life changes they desire to make, but struggle to achieve. We were given the opportunity to use small figures to illustrate to ourselves what "not the best of me" and "the best of me" looked like. We were then invited to illustrate what God's role was in both situations.

Using this methodology helps to bypass the natural mental blocks that so often prevent us from responding to how God is guiding us from "not the best of me" to the wholeness of "the best of me". St Paul wrote, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7.15). He would have found this helpful with his own struggles.

Bishop Stephen and Dr Raimundo both expressed their pleasure at the high degree of engagement by the participants. The conference was also an opportunity for clergy to enjoy wide-ranging and spirited discussion among themselves – sometimes late into the night.

Thanks was expressed to the musicians among us, and those providing both orthodox and unorthodox liturgy that was worshipful and at times also amusing. Our gratitude extends to the Abbey team led by Dr Cath Connelly, and to Bishop Richard, who presided at our final Eucharist. In celebrating the feast day of St Alban, our bishop reminded us that St Alban was converted not through intentional evangelism, but by the steadfast piety of a priest on the run from persecutors.

The Rev'd John Webster is Rector of the Parish of Drouin.

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## How faith and science are shaping humanity's future

■ Sally Woollett

The scientific and the spiritual are often seen as separate realms, but both are major driving forces of humanity and culture. Are faith and religion still relevant to the current scientific conversation?

What does faith have to say about gene editing, artificial intelligence, and biodiversity? Can faith and science find any common ground in these matters?

These questions and more were explored at 'The Scientific & Spiritual Human: Faith for Our Genetic Futures', a one-day conference exploring the intersection of faith and science in shaping humanity's future.

The conference was a joint initiative of ISCAST (Christianity and Science in Conversation), the University of Divinity and Trinity College Theological School.

Melbourne University Emeritus Professor of Genetics Professor Philip Batterham overviewed current discoveries

and future directions in genetic technology. Also among the speakers was University of Notre Dame research fellow Dr Victoria Lorrimar (Co-Creators? Theological Perspectives on Human Enhancement and AI). She has conducted doctoral research in theology and science at the University of Oxford.

Dr Brian Edgar, who was Professor of Theological Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, spoke on Faith and the Future: Christian Reflections on Human Enhancement, Transhumanism and AI. He has written extensively about the intersection of theology, ethics and science.

University of Melbourne research fellow Dr Kate Dooley discussed The State of Our Planet, According to Climate Science. She has been following the UN climate negotiations since 2009, focusing on the role of forests and land use in climate mitigation, and how human rights and the

rights of Indigenous peoples are central to these efforts.

Professor Michael Clarke, Emeritus Professor of Zoology at La Trobe University – who is passionate about climate change and creation care and an expert witness in fire ecology at the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission – covered the ecological consequences of climate change for flora and fauna.

Professor John Wiseman, based at Melbourne Climate Futures and the University of Melbourne's School of Population and Global Health, offered a sociological perspective on hope and courage in the climate crisis. Taking a theological perspective, meteorologist Dr Mick Pope took attendees on a Journey through Climate Change: Rediscovering God's Plan for Creation.

ISCAST plans to hold further one-day conferences in future.

## Science at the Cathedral

ISCAST's Science Week at the Cathedral event will be on Wednesday 16 August at 2–3 pm, St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.

This year's Science Week theme is Innovation, and the Science Week at the Cathedral speaker will be biomedical engineer David Grayden. He was in the team that helped to develop the cochlear implant, led by Graeme Clark, and is now working on other exciting bionic possibilities, such as the bionic eye.

For further information, visit [iscast.org/events](http://iscast.org/events).



■ Tracy Taggart

CSIRO's partnership with James Cook University (JCU) is providing career-defining studentship opportunities for students like Jake Papadopoulos and Courtney Burns.

Through the JCU–CSIRO Indigenous Undergraduate Traineeship program, Indigenous students are getting a taste of research and science beyond the classroom, helping them solidify their career goals.

Arrente man Jake Papadopoulos combined his love of maths with his love of marine science in a reef conservation project. Now, he wants to aim for a PhD.

Brataualung woman Courtney Burns' traineeship project was shark research in CSIRO's predator population division. Her studentship has given her the confidence to pursue a career in science.

### Taking maths to marine science

It didn't take Jake very long to work out that marine science wasn't quite right for him.

The Arrente man from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and JCU student was more interested in numbers and logic. So, he transferred from a Bachelor of Marine Science to a Bachelor of Science with a maths major and physics minor.



Jake wants to get a PhD and become an academic

Jake jumped at the opportunity to undertake a CSIRO Indigenous Undergraduate Traineeship. He worked on a project using wave modelling software to investigate reef conservation, which was a perfect fit as it tied together original and current study disciplines.

Jake's research project was investigating the effect of reef restoration on the attenuation (reduction of the force) of wave energy, and what that means for habitats like seagrass and mangroves.

"My supervisor had already collected the data. So, my role was learning how to use and apply the SWASH (Simulating WAVes till SHore) wave modelling software," Jake said.

"My placement was around 15 weeks in total. During that time, I learned how to properly complete a literature review and improved my skills in coding. I now have a better understanding of how to undertake a research project. By juggling uni commitments with my CSIRO research, I've improved my time management skills. And I've got some valuable experience working remotely, including working with people in different time zones.

"The experience has definitely influenced my career goals. I kind of knew what I wanted to do, but it's much clearer now. I want to complete a PhD and become an academic. I want to do mathematical modelling in a marine setting because

I really enjoyed it," Jake said.

"The studentship is perfect if you can find a research project that lines up with your interests. It provides a taste of a research career, even if you decide that research is not for you."

Jake is grateful to CSIRO staff Megan Saunders, Maria Vozzo, Stephanie Contardo, Fiona Smallwood and Ally Lankester for their support.



Courtney wants to become a marine scientist

### Shark research for Courtney

Courtney is a Brataualung woman from the Gunaikurnai Nation in South Gippsland. She is a third-year marine science student at JCU.

She undertook her studentship as a research technician in CSIRO's predator population division, working out of Townsville, with supervisors based in Tasmania.

"Throughout my studentship, I learned data analysis and different coding functions. I also learned about great white shark anatomy and various dissection tips via attending a necropsy of a juvenile male," Courtney said.

"I've also learned general job skills around teamwork, organisation skills, work skills and computer proficiency."

But studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) wasn't just about the technology and the practical work skills for Courtney.

"Being an Indigenous woman in STEM has led me to suffer a severe case of 'imposter syndrome' throughout my studies. I am constantly wondering if I'm good enough to make it in such a competitive field of study and research.

"Doing work experience with CSIRO has allowed me to believe in myself and push through the confidence barriers I've been facing in the last two years. It has made me excited for when – not if – I have a career in research."

CSIRO

# Climate action at church: five practical tips

Here are a few suggestions and resources from ACTinG (Acting on Climate Together in Gippsland) to help reduce carbon emissions from church buildings.

## ■ Jan Down

### 1. Change aircon temperature by 1 degree and save 10% on energy!

The energy auditor at the Sale Cathedral noted, "Minor adjustments to air conditioner settings will reduce [energy] usage notably. Every 1 degree Celsius above 20 degrees setting will add 10% to the heating cost. ... The reverse is true on cooling, for every degree lower than 23 degrees, it will add 10% to the cooling cost." He suggested a winter setting of 18–20 degrees and, for summer, 22–23 degrees.

### 2. Avoid or compost waste in church kitchens

Thirty parishes – that's 30 church kitchens (plus out-centres!) have to dispose of food waste, packaging and cleaning products. If every church makes improvements to the way they do this, it will have a real impact. And it will encourage individuals to do the same at home.

Food waste can be collected to be composted at home or in the church/community garden compost bin. Your local council may provide a green waste bin that can include food scraps.

Sustainability Victoria has a helpful online tool to make recycling easier: 'Small acts big impact' suggests six small acts and provides tips and tricks on each. It also helps you reach the relevant section of your council website quickly, to check on how to recycle in your area. Things change, and councils are different, so it's good to check: search 'small acts, big impact' at [sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://sustainability.vic.gov.au).

Take a one-minute quiz about your kitchen habits. Based on your answers, you will be offered a choice of three small actions to choose from:

[sustainability.vic.gov.au/recycling-and-reducing-waste/at-home/small-acts-big-impact/choose-your-small-act](http://sustainability.vic.gov.au/recycling-and-reducing-waste/at-home/small-acts-big-impact/choose-your-small-act)

### 3. Compare energy providers

Find out how your energy provider compares environmentally: [choice.com.au/home-improvement/energy-saving/reducing-your-carbon-footprint/articles/green-electricity-review](http://choice.com.au/home-improvement/energy-saving/reducing-your-carbon-footprint/articles/green-electricity-review)

Also, consider a not-for-profit energy cooperative:

[cooperativepower.org.au](http://cooperativepower.org.au)

### 4. Improve energy efficiency

Energy-saving tips, like fitting draught seals to windows and doors, are available from the Victorian Government:

[energy.vic.gov.au/for-households/save-energy-and-money/top-10-energy-saving-tips/winter-energy-saving-tips](http://energy.vic.gov.au/for-households/save-energy-and-money/top-10-energy-saving-tips/winter-energy-saving-tips)

### 5. When they wear out, replace gas appliances with electric ones

Gas is a polluting fossil fuel, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Council says "gas appliances are less efficient and more expensive to run than modern electric equivalents". See the Climate Council's guide to getting off gas: [climatecouncil.org.au/resources/getting-your-home-off-gas-quick-guide](http://climatecouncil.org.au/resources/getting-your-home-off-gas-quick-guide)

## Small acts make a big impact.

Planning to eat leftovers once a week helps reduce food going to waste. This saves natural resources and can save you money.

Find your small act today at [sustainability.vic.gov.au/small-acts-big-impact](http://sustainability.vic.gov.au/small-acts-big-impact)



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# Mosses: vital for the health of our soil and our planet

Some people see moss growing in their gardens as a problem, but what they may not realise is this ancient ancestor of all plants is bringing lots of benefits to our green spaces, such as protecting against erosion.

Now a massive global study led by UNSW Sydney has found mosses are not just good for the garden, but are just as vital for the health of the entire planet when they grow on topsoil. Not only do they lay the foundations for plants to flourish in ecosystems around the world, they may play an important role mitigating against climate change by capturing vast amounts of carbon.

In a study published recently in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, lead author Dr David Eldridge and more than 50 colleagues from international research institutions described how they collected samples of mosses growing on soil from more than 123 ecosystems across the globe, ranging from lush, tropical rainforest to barren polar landscapes, through to arid deserts like those found in Australia. The researchers found that mosses cover a staggering 9.4 million km<sup>2</sup> in the environments surveyed, which compares in size to Canada or China.

"We were originally really interested in

how natural systems of native vegetation that haven't been disturbed much differ from human made systems like parks and gardens – our green spaces," says Dr Eldridge, who is with UNSW's School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences.

"So for this study, we wanted to look at a bit more detail about mosses and what they actually do, in terms of providing essential services to the environment. We looked at what was happening in soils dominated by mosses and what was happening in soils where there were no mosses. And we were gobsmacked to find that mosses were doing all these amazing things."

It turns out that mosses are the lifeblood of plant ecosystems, that plants actually benefit from having moss as a neighbour. The researchers assessed 24 ways that moss provided benefits to soil and other plants. In patches of soil where mosses were present, there was more nutrient cycling, decomposition of organic matter and even control of pathogens harmful to other plants and people.

On top of that, the authors say mosses may be instrumental in reabsorbing carbon dioxide. They estimated, that compared to bare soils where there was no moss, this ancient precursor to plants is supporting the storage of 6.43 gigatonnes – or 6.43 billion

tonnes – of carbon from the atmosphere. These levels of carbon capture are of a similar magnitude to levels of carbon release from agricultural practices such as land clearing and overgrazing.

"So you've got all the global emissions from land use change, such as grazing, clearing vegetation and activities associated with agriculture – we think mosses are sucking up six times more carbon dioxide, so it's not one to one, it's six times better," Dr Eldridge says.

The researchers say that the positive ecological functions of soil mosses are also likely associated with their influence on surface microclimates, such as by affecting soil temperature and moisture.

Future research aims to examine whether urban mosses can create healthy soils as effectively as those growing in natural areas.

"We are also keen to develop strategies to reintroduce mosses into degraded soils to speed up the regeneration process," Dr Eldridge says.

"Mosses may well provide the perfect vehicle to kick-start the recovery of severely degraded urban and natural area soils."

UNSW Sydney

## What exactly is moss?

Mosses are different to vascular plants. They have roots and leaves, but their roots are different, with root-like growths called rhizoids that anchor them to the soil surface. "Mosses don't have the plumbing that an ordinary plant has, called a xylem and a phloem, which water moves through," Dr Eldridge says.

"But moss survives by picking up water from the atmosphere. And some mosses, like the ones in the dry parts of Australia, curl when they get dry, but they don't die – they live in suspended animation forever. We've taken mosses out of a packet after 100 years, squirted them with water and watched them come to life. Their cells don't disintegrate like ordinary plants do."

Without moss, our ecosystems would be in big trouble, says Dr Eldridge.

"People think if moss is growing on soil it means the soil is sterile or has something wrong with it. But it's actually doing great things, you know, in terms of the chemistry of the soil, like adding more carbon and nitrogen, as well as being primary stabilisers when you get lots of disturbance."

"What we show in our research is that where you have mosses you have a greater level of soil health, such as more carbon and more nitrogen. So they're helping to prime the soil for the return of trees, shrubs, and grasses, that eventually end up getting out-competed in the process. So they're the first guys that get in there and fix things up and then first to leave."



# Another way of hearing The Voice

JJ Harrison

Australian Senate, Parliament of Australia, Canberra

■ Max Thomas

The Constitution of Australia includes many principles and concepts, but the founders wisely avoided being too prescriptive. The purpose of The High Court is to interpret The Constitution and the law, but it does not make laws. That is the role of Parliaments. For example, The Constitution is silent about freedom of speech. However, the High Court has ruled that our freedom of expression is inherent within the democratic principles set out in The Constitution.

According to some proponents of The Voice, it is merely a constitutional concept, but unlike earlier legislative measures, it could not be changed or removed by government. However, its implementation would be a matter for the federal parliament and the bureaucracy. Therefore The Voice (as proposed), would be subject to the same political forces and bureaucratic shortcomings as existing and previous attempts to address Indigenous disadvantage.

Future enabling legislation would need to be more prescriptive than The Constitution. Functions and responsibilities not specifically prescribed in the enabling law might be deemed not to exist. So, the potential for future political disputes concerning the intended constitutional purpose and function of The Voice is obvious. Imagine how The Dismissal might have turned out in 1975 if the founders of our federation had left our right to vote with future politicians.

The High Court of Australia has already decided that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had rights to the land before the British arrived. It can be inferred from this and subsequent legislation that Indigenous peoples are already recognised and have the same rights as other Australians.

Recognition of Indigenous peoples in The Constitution should be treated as an important but separate question from The Voice. A referendum to formally recognise Indigenous peoples in The Constitution would surely receive overwhelming endorsement.

The Constitution sets out, in detail, methods for electing our political representatives. Instead of conflating The Voice question with formal recognition, a separate referendum question could ask for approval of an amendment to specifically include arrangements for the election of additional National Indigenous Senators in proportion to the Indigenous population of the nation as a whole, not by state or territory. Prior to elections, Indigenous people could choose to enrol on either the Indigenous or the general electoral roll, as Māori people do in New Zealand.

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) website states: "We work directly to and support the Minister for Indigenous Australians. We work to

influence policy across the entire Australian Government. We also liaise closely with State and Territory governments to ensure that Indigenous programs and services are delivering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as intended."

The Hon Linda Burney MP, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, should explain how a separate Voice to Parliament would interact with the NIAA and what could The Voice achieve that cannot be done through the existing agency, albeit with the advice of elected Indigenous Senators, as suggested above?

The Commonwealth Government should heed the advice of eminent Indigenous leader Noel Pearson, who said there is an "urgent need to elevate the goal of recognizing Indigenous Australians in the Constitution above the creation of the Voice advisory body."

I agree with Mr Pearson and would add that if the government persists with its present approach, the referendum is likely to bring shame, division and national disgrace on Australia, far worse than Brexit has caused the UK.

Max Thomas, now retired in West Gippsland, worked in the public sector and in private consulting on a range of land, water and waste management projects. Article first published at openforum.com.au.



## From the editor

In 2024, *The Gippsland Anglican* will reach a special milestone: 120 years of publication!

This is a big achievement – many different people have been involved in the publication over the years. Countless contributors have told their stories, and shared images that spoke many more words.

The many editors of *TGA* have played a big part in the publication – interviewing, commissioning, writing and editing.

Previous *TGA* editor Jan Down will be a regular correspondent for the 120th year, delving into the archives to unearth material taking us back through some of *TGA*'s highlights, so that we can reflect on some of the changes that we and our forebears have experienced over more than a century.

*TGA* is aiming for another milestone on

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"With the strong support of parishes and contributors, *The Gippsland Anglican* has been a vehicle for story-telling, celebration and proclaiming the gospel in our region for 119 years," says Bishop Richard, who is a member of the magazine's editorial committee. "That is a remarkable achievement and we are eagerly looking forward to the 120th milestone in 2024."



## Giving a gift that lasts

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#### ■ Daniel Lowe

Have you ever had one of those moments in a conversation when you wanted to say something but then decided not to? Perhaps you weren't quick enough to formulate a reply? Perhaps you just weren't sure what to say? Or maybe you were worried about what reaction your comment might get. Not all of us are as quick as we might like when it comes to debating ideas, and there is something to be said for the delayed and considered response. And speaking in ignorance rarely adds much to a discussion.

But it seems that, more and more often, what stops us from sharing our thoughts is the fear of being declared out of step, or worse, 'problematic' by those we are in conversation with. And there is no doubt that expressing a religious view is more likely to elicit a rapid condemnation. We have seen this play out publicly with high-profile figures such as Andrew Thorburn and Margaret Court – and these public stoushes set the tone for all of us.

That is not to suggest that a religious view should have some sort of privileged position. We live in a complex and diverse society where many different worldviews are represented, and we need to learn to navigate that space together. And a critical

### ***Our well-intentioned desire to shield young people from the possible 'trauma' of confronting and challenging topics actually risks causing them more harm.***

part of that work will be equipping our young people with the skills to discuss controversial issues and engage in meaningful and respectful conversations about issues that matter. So why does our cultural milieu seem to run so counter to this goal?

Social psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt suggests that, in perpetuating what he calls three great untruths hindering healthy discourse and understanding, we are doing ourselves a great harm. These three untruths can be summarised as:

- "What doesn't kill you makes you weaker"
- "Always trust your feelings"

- "Life is a battle between good people and evil people".

Over the next three issues of *TGA*, I want to explore how each of these untruths can be seen being played out and what an alternative picture might look like.

#### **The untruth of fragility ("What doesn't kill you makes you weaker")**

The first untruth centres around the idea that people are inherently fragile and need protection from discomfiting ideas. I have written previously about the concept of children being 'antifragile'. Just like bones and muscles need to be used and pushed to stay strong, kids' psyches need to be challenged to keep them balanced and healthy. Our well-intentioned desire to shield young people from the possible 'trauma' of confronting and challenging topics actually risks causing them more harm. In Haidt's words, "By over-protecting our children we are setting them up to be weak, to be more easily damaged, to be more easily discouraged."

The first step in equipping a young person to engage in healthy, robust and respectful conversation is to expose them

to ideas that may challenge them, opinions that they might disagree with, and to help them see that wrestling with these ideas will strengthen them, not harm them. Of course, some protective boundaries are needed. Consideration still needs to be given to things like age and developmental appropriateness. Just as we don't let teenagers get behind the wheel of a car unsupervised, in the same way young people need adults to help them navigate controversial topics.

That is one of the reasons I love teaching Ethics. Like learning to drive, taking subjects like Ethics, Philosophy, History and English guides students through the process of engaging with conflicting ideas in a safe, supportive and supervised context. It might be challenging and even uncomfortable for students at times, but it is far more likely to strengthen than harm them. Imagine if PE teachers stopped running sports classes because we didn't want students to experience physical discomfort?

When we go too far in sheltering our young people from ideas that we disagree with or worldviews that make us uncomfortable, we inadvertently tell them that they are too fragile to cope with them and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In No Doubt's 1995 single *Don't Speak*, lead singer Gwen Stefani sang, "Don't tell me 'cause it hurts." She may have been talking about a failed relationship, but those words capture the mindset that comes from believing the untruth of

fragility. "Your ideas make me uncomfortable, and I am too fragile to cope with them so you mustn't speak them." Is this how we want our young people to respond to each other?

The idea of anti-fragility is not a new one. Consider what the Apostle Paul says about suffering: "... because we know that suffering helps us to endure. And endurance builds character, which gives us a hope that will never disappoint us." (Romans 5:3-5). The discomfort of encountering conflicting ideas builds strength. But simply being willing to encounter new and potentially challenging ideas is only

the first step in equipping young people to engage in respectful conversation.

In the next edition of *TGA*, I will look at the implications of Haidt's second great untruth: that we should always trust our feelings.

In the meantime, Paul's advice is this: "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person" (Colossians 4:6).

Daniel Lowe is a School Chaplain at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School.

## Our commitment to a safe church

The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland is committed to ensuring our centres of worship and outreach are safe places for all, and it does not tolerate abuse or misconduct by church workers.

If you have any concerns, for yourself or someone you know, please contact our Professional Standards Office for a confidential discussion.



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## Please donate to support Aboriginal Ministry in Gippsland



"We...make [ministry] significant in our cultural way."  
The Revd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy



"We are learning and we are on this journey of reconciliation and healing together."  
The Revd Kathy Dalton



**Your donation to Aboriginal ministry is vital.**

Gippsland Anglicans is raising funds to continue its support of Aboriginal Ministry. The Revd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy (L) and The Revd Kathy Dalton (R), pictured here with The Rt Revd Dr Richard Treloar, Bishop of Gippsland, work together to support the spiritual needs of Aboriginal people across the vast area of Gippsland. They are regularly called to other places and interstate to provide culturally appropriate support and care.

**Please scan the QR code or visit [www.gippslandanglicans.org.au](http://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au) for options.**



# Atheist Delusions:

## *The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies*

By David Bentley Hart

The University Press, 2009

■ Richard Prideaux

American polymath David Bentley Hart is a writer of 19 books, a philosopher, critic, religious scholar and theologian with over 1000 essays/reviews and papers to his credit. His particular interests include Christian metaphysics, philosophy of the mind, and Indian and East Asian metaphysics. He is a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church but counts himself as about a third-rate Christian. His writing style has been called baroque and I must admit I had my online dictionary out far more often than for most books I read.

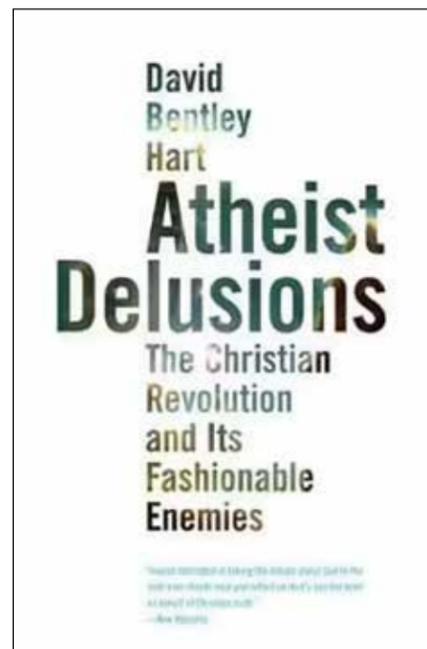
*Atheist Delusions* is written in the form of an essay with minimal footnotes and no long list of secondary resources at the end, although within his text the author interacts with a great many historians and philosophers of religion.

*Atheist Delusions* is a stunning piece of writing. From beginning to end (241 pages), Hart maintained my strong interest, even though the subject matter is quite challenging. There is something in his clear, learned, energetic writing that keeps the reader alive and excited. In a vigorous, not to say ferocious, opening attack Hart has written a demolition of 20th and 21st century modernity, with his chief targets being Daniel Dennett, the late Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Phillip Pulman and what he calls their "dreary, fundamentalist atheism." Hart contrasts these writers' thin arguments with the quality of Enlightenment philosophers like Nietzsche, David Hume, Voltaire and Edward Gibbon, with their "unparalleled passion and visionary intensity."

In the second section, Hart attacks "Modernity's rewriting of the Christian Past," strongly disagreeing with scholars like medieval champions Jacques Le Goff and Jonathan Kirsch, who readily blame the growth of Christianity for the destruction of classical civilisation. Hart argues that in fact "it was the Church's monasteries alone that saved classical civilisation from the total eclipse it would otherwise have suffered." Again, in the East also: "Hellenic wisdom was preserved in the libraries of Greece, Syria and Asia Minor."

**One of Hart's most scathing attacks on Enlightenment history is the notion that Christianity fought against the development of modern science when in fact it was a long line of Christian scholars and thinkers who consistently paved the way for scientific progress and saved many manuscripts in their monasteries that would otherwise have been lost.**

One of Hart's most scathing attacks on Enlightenment history is the notion that Christianity fought against the development of modern science when in fact it was a long line of Christian scholars and thinkers who consistently paved the way



for scientific progress and saved many manuscripts in their monasteries that would otherwise have been lost.

Enlightenment historians are also quick to blame Christianity for all the religious wars in Europe following the Reformation, a series of disasters that had much more to do with the acquisition of land and power than any particular theology. The real "age of darkness," Hart notes, was the 20th century, "the most violent century in human history ..." Hart's challenging conclusion is that "we have reached the age of perfect unreason ... but, true reason is knowledge perfected in wisdom ... and a rational life involves the ability to grasp what one does not know."

*Atheist Delusions* will require attention and energy but the effort is well worth it. Five stars and rising.

# The Promise

By Damon Galgut

Chatto and Windus, 2021

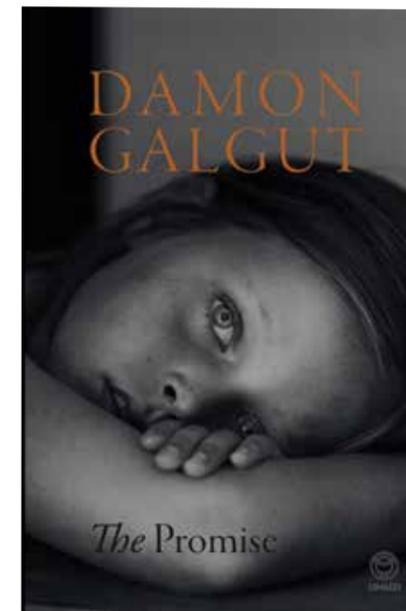
■ Rev'd Canon David Head

This evocative and beautifully written novel by South African noted author Damon Galgut is set in the immediate pre- and post-Apartheid era in South Africa. It follows two generations of the troubled 'white' Swart family, who are of Afrikaaner heritage. The Swart family is made up of mother and father and three children, and some quite powerful and controlling aunts and uncles. The novel explores their often-fraught relationships with each other, their bigoted attitudes to their black servants, and the empty and spiritually abusive religious environments in which they live. (A warning that this review reveals crucial elements of the plot.)

Early on in the novel, the mother dies painfully of cancer. She has been devotedly looked after by their black maid, Salome. On her deathbed, the mother asks her husband to promise to give Salome the little house on the edge of their farm property as thanks for her years of devoted care and service to the family. The husband agrees, but has absolutely no intention of fulfilling that promise as "blacks can't own property nor will they ever do so". Unbeknown to the father, their youngest daughter, Amor (which symbolically means 'love') is witness to the promise. The theme of this novel and the meaning of its title is ongoing family avoidance and eventual fulfillment of that promise, by Amor.

The father becomes a zealous Christian on the death of his wife. He gives land on the edge of the farm to, and builds a church for, the ambitious and self-promoting very fundamentalist Calvinist pastor, who is both almost completely physically blind and clearly almost completely spiritually blind too. The father, who also co-owns a popular tourist snake park, tests the strength of his faith in God by sitting with venomous snakes. He is fatally bitten and dies. The pastor sees it as a minor setback and becomes more zealous.

The middle daughter marries well and leads a vain, selfish and luxurious lifestyle, which doesn't satisfy her, so she enters an adulterous affair. She is not very religious but she decides she needs to confess to her Roman Catholic parish priest about her love affair. The priest hears her confession but is not convinced of her repentance so he refuses her absolution. She angrily leaves and on the way home is carjacked by a black man who wants her luxury car to sell on the black market. She is shot dead and so she dies 'unshriven', which seems to have an ongoing cumulative negative effect on the rest of the family. The older brother becomes an alcoholic, is in a childless unhappy marriage, and the farm



decays around him. He eventually sees life as meaningless, and commits suicide.

Amor, the only remaining member of the family, had for years separated herself from the toxic family environment and had attended only funerals to try to bring about the fulfillment of the promise – to no avail.

Describing the funeral of the murdered daughter, the narrator observes:

We are a rainbow nation, which is to say it's a mixed and motley and mongrel assembly in the church today, restive and ill at ease, like antagonistic elements of the periodic table. But the priest addresses them all indiscriminately, raining words in Latin upon them ... and only the opacity of God unites them.

Finally, Amor is able to use her long-unused family inheritance to fulfill the promise.

This novel is full of biblical symbolism and allusions that are both clear and creatively hidden, and the language is very evocative, and often poetic.



**Australia is having a conversation about the Voice referendum being held later this year.**

It's about whether we should change the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

The Voice would be an independent and permanent advisory body. It would give advice to the Australian Parliament and Government on matters that affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Get informed.  
Voice.gov.au



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## Prayer for science

Let us pray for the world of technology and scientific research.

Lord, you have endowed human beings with the ability to search out your laws and have given them the freedom to apply their knowledge as they choose.

We ask your blessing on all engaged in scientific research and technology and on those who provide the resources for such work; that choice may be made of projects which both enhance human life and have regard to the safety and well-being of the natural order.

*May we thus be true stewards of your bounty, to our own inner satisfaction and your greater glory.*

Amen.

David Welbourn/theologyofwork.org

## Coming up



**Abbey events – see page 8.**

### Science Week at the Cathedral

16 August, 2–3 pm  
St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.  
[iscast.org/events](http://iscast.org/events).

### New Heaven, New Earth

St Paul's Cathedral arts festival  
20 August – 1 September  
St Paul's Cathedral, Sale.  
Contact Jenny Batten (0438213382,  
[batjen54@gmail.com](mailto:batjen54@gmail.com)).

### Safe Church Refresher workshops

*St George's Corinella*  
8 September, 2–5 pm.  
Register by 6 September  
[trybooking.com/CGDLT](http://trybooking.com/CGDLT).

## You're invited to a Seminar on the Gospel of Matthew

Presented by The Rev'd Canon Dr Robert Derrenbacker  
Dean, Trinity College Theological School, Melbourne  
on Saturday 12 August 2023

2–4 pm  
St Paul's Cathedral  
149 Cunninghame St  
Sale



For more information  
contact [dean@stpaulssale.org.au](mailto:dean@stpaulssale.org.au) or (03) 5144 2020.

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