

**REPORT OF THE INDIGENOUS POLICY STEERING GROUP
SEPTEMBER 2011**

The Archbishop set up this committee in August 2010 in order to make recommendations on policy in regard to Indigenous matters. This was in response to Synod discussion in 2009 of the **Australian Indigenous Ministry Survey**, and the 2010 Synod motion on **Practical Restitution for Indigenous Peoples**.

The members of the Steering Group are Barbara Deutschmann, Jane Freemantle, Murray Seiffert, Campbell Bairstow and Peter Adam [convenor]. In addition to our ordinary meetings, we also met with Ray Cleary and Michael Dowling, representatives of Archbishop in Council. We are grateful to them for their contribution. We deeply regret that for various reasons it was not possible to include Indigenous representation on, or input to, this committee. We recommend this be remedied as a priority.

The relationships between Indigenous Australians and later arrivals have continued to be painful and complex since 1788. The role of the Anglican Church in these matters has also been complex. While we thank God for those who have worked for good, we can also see that harm has been done, unintentionally as well as intentionally.

Our hope is for reconciliation, harmony, and true unity. We want this for our nation and for all Australians. We want our church to be a means and agent of reconciliation, and to bear witness to the reconciliation which is found in Jesus Christ. We need to set our own house in order, so that we can make our best contribution to our nation, and honour God in our corporate life. This agenda needs to be addressed in consultation and discussion with indigenous people, including all those who have been the recipients of the Anglican Church's ministry and services, especially those provided by Anglican agencies.

We believe that in the pursuit of justice restitution must address matters that are relational, structural, humanitarian and financial, and include the provision of equal access to resources in education, health, housing, income support and employment.

1. The outcomes of our work include:

- i. Commissioning Murray Seiffert to write a short history of Anglican-indigenous relationships in Victoria [with a focus on Melbourne]. This is due to be published in April 2012.
- ii. Planning a parish pilot project, with the aim of educating parishes on these matters.
- iii. Commissioning readings and prayers for the Week of Reconciliation, which we hope will be widely used in 2012.
- iv. Producing discussion papers on a number of issues, which will be available on the Diocesan website. The papers include topics such as Australian Indigenous Ministry Survey, Values Matrix, Indigenous Leadership Training, Forging links with local Indigenous people, Prayers for the Week of Reconciliation, Best practice in working relationships and partnerships, the 2010 Synod Motion on Practical Restitution, TEAR documents and other resources.
- v. Producing this report and its recommendations.

2. In response to the Australian Indigenous Ministry Survey, we recommend the following directions in policy and strategy, in order to promote Reconciliation and Restitution.

Initiatives that promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People within the Anglican Church of Australia must be approached through developing relationships with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities with due consideration of the issues of the past and with adequate consultation with the people involved. In these relationships we must honour our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters in Christ. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in Ministry should be considered across the spectrum of the community from lay leaders including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People youth leaders, including within Anglican schools, school chaplaincy, through to ordination and beyond. This would have the potential to increase the participation and voice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all aspects of the Diocese of Melbourne.

In order to promote Reconciliation and Restitution in all its domains and in response to the Australian Indigenous Ministry Survey, we recommend the following directions in policy and strategies for the Diocese of Melbourne:

- i. The firm intention to embark on a process of engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- ii. The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Reconciliation Australia. Such a plan would include:
 - a. A commitment to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community leaders and arrange to meet to determine the process for the development of a RAP,
 - b. The establishment of a Reconciliation Working Group, ideally chaired by a representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People,
 - c. Greater expansion of the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People symbols and languages in Anglican worship,
 - d. The development of a Biblical and theological framework.
- iii. A greater understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality, seeking to understand the subtleties of the relationships between the cultures and the way that these are expressed in religion.
- iv. Pathways for leaders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People within the Anglican Church be determined and supported.
- v. Strategies to work with parishes, to educate and raise awareness, inform and transform grass-roots Anglicans and their churches be developed through cultural awareness initiatives in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- vi. Training of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for leadership within the Christian community and within lay and ordained Ministry supported by:
 - a. Reviewing training opportunities and devising a strategy to assist and attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to theological training, supporting them to reach their full potential,
 - b. Encouraging the provision of theological education for Indigenous leaders,
 - c. Ensuring awareness raising of cultural issues within the parishes, and among the clergy and laity to inform and support formation initiatives

3. In response to the motion passed at the 2010 Synod, we felt that more preparation and information would be needed in order for this to be a significant action. Here is a draft proposal for a model for financial Reconciliation and Restitution for consideration by the Synod.

This is the kind of model that could be adopted by the Synod, and also commended in principle by the Synod for adoption in individually appropriate ways by Anglican parishes, agencies, schools and colleges.

For the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne:

- i. A long-term financial commitment to reconciliation with and restitution to Indigenous people.
- ii. The annual allocation to an 'Indigenous peoples Reconciliation and Restitution Trust Fund' of at least 1% of non-specifically designated income.
- iii. A commitment to make this provision for a ten year period. [It may then be renewed for a further period of time].
- iv. The committee would set up funding guidelines, and then be responsible for the allocation of the money for the following:
 - Ministry or service provided by Indigenous people for Indigenous people.
 - Ministry or service provided for Indigenous people.
- v. The money allocated would be held in the 'Indigenous peoples Reconciliation and Restitution Trust Fund' within the Diocesan accounts, and subject to the usual standards of fiduciary management and audit.
- vi. The money allocated from the Diocesan Accounts would be allocated by a committee chaired by the Archbishop [or the Archbishop's representative], and including one representative of NATSIAC, and at least two other Indigenous people. It would be spent in Victoria as the first priority, but could also be allocated elsewhere in Australia.
- vii. The protocol for the distribution of money would feature both respect for Indigenous people, and responsibility in management.
- viii. The model would be implemented from January 2013.

We propose that the Diocese engage in a discussion and debate about the nature and details of various aspects of reconciliation and restitution, and that the matter be discussed at Synod in 2012, with decisions made at that time.

Note.

Money from parishes, agencies, schools or colleges which adopt this model would be distributed by those bodies to the purposes listed above, used to provide ministry or service in kind, or given to the Diocesan committee for distribution.